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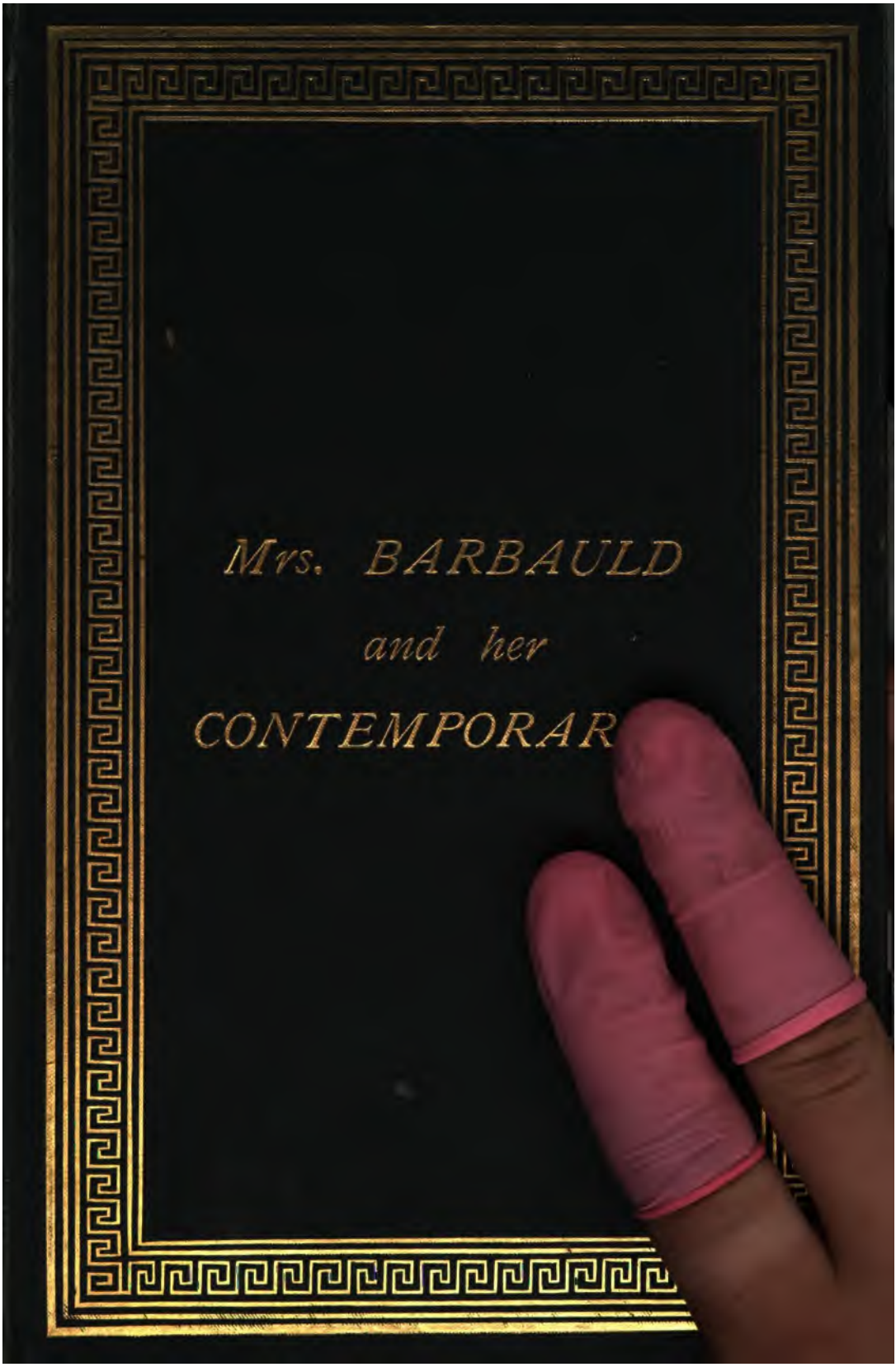
Mrs. BARBAULD
and her
CONTEMPORAR

MRS. BARBAULD

AND HER CONTEMPORARIES;

SKETCHES OF SOME

EMINENT LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC

ENGLISHWOMEN.

BY

JEROM MURCH,

PRESIDENT OF THE BATH LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION.

"We live by Admiration, Hope and Love;
And even as these are well and wisely fixed
In dignity of being we ascend."

WORDSWORTH.

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TO

THE COMMITTEE

OF THE

BATH ROYAL LITERARY

AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION,

THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED

BY ONE WHO THROUGH MANY YEARS

HAS HAD THE GREAT ADVANTAGE

OF THEIR CO-OPERATION AND FRIENDSHIP.

This Book originated in the last of four Papers which were read in different years at the Bath Institution and printed for the perusal of friends. I did not expect that "Mrs. Barbauld and her Contemporaries" would be sought beyond the circle within which my former efforts had been kindly received. The subject, however, proved to be more interesting, and I was requested to offer to the public this portion of the fruit of the little leisure of a busy life. In complying with the wish I have been glad to find myself unfettered by the necessity of compressing what I had to say within the time allowed for an evening meeting. I have now tried not only to make sketches which were much too meagre more satisfactory but also to introduce others which I unwillingly omitted, though important to my object. These, with some extracts, original letters, and similar biographical illustrations will be found in an appendix; may they give a better idea of the period to which they relate and of the eminent women by whom it was adorned.

J. M.

Cranwells, Bath;
May 1st, 1877.

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MRS. BARBAULD

AND HER CONTEMPORARIES.

PART I.

The period of English Literature for our consideration is the last quarter of the eighteenth and the first of the nineteenth century. Mrs. Barbauld was born in 1743, published her first work in 1773, continued to write as late as 1822 and died in her eighty-second year in 1825. The contemporaries of whom I propose to speak are the more distinguished of the women who first followed Mrs. Barbauld in giving to the world books on various subjects. Some of them both began and continued to write later than she did, remaining on the stage after a younger generation had entered upon it, but all may be regarded as belonging to the same period.

I have chosen this subject because I fear it is either not generally known or not sufficiently remembered how much English Literature owes to these women.

They did more than give to the world books of high repute; they suffered under great discouragements connected with the times in which their lot was cast. Men alone were then thought worthy of the privilege of writing; women were generally considered incapable of any important intellectual effort. I am far from thinking that Mrs. Barbauld and her contemporaries were on the whole superior to the literary ladies of a generation nearer our own; but more praise is due to the former because their difficulties were greater. "Two powers," says Max Müller, are necessary to every thing really great, one creative, the other receptive." "Where love and sympathy are wanting in a people, there poetry flourishes as little as the rose will yield its fragrance without sunshine."* To these remarks of the eminent German writer I may add that love and sympathy were awakened by Mrs. Barbauld and her contemporaries; they were in full vigour to quicken the inspiration of their successors.

Perhaps we shall better realise the position of both if we look a little farther back. The history of the English Literature of the last three hundred years is well known to be marked by great alternations. From

* Correspondence between Schiller and the Duke of Schleswig Holstein. "Macmillan's Magazine," August, 1876.

the middle of the sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth there was marvellous intellectual vigour and brilliancy. It was the age of Spencer, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Lord Bacon, Milton, Hooker, Sir Walter Raleigh, Lord Clarendon, George Herbert, John Bunyan and Jeremy Taylor. From the middle of the seventeenth to the middle of the eighteenth there may have been greater refinement and wider diffusion of taste but there was also considerable diminution of power. Dryden, Addison, Pope, Swift, Bolingbroke, Hume, Smollet, Fielding, Richardson, all wrote works which commanded and still command many readers while decidedly inferior to those of the preceding generation. Dr. Johnson of course stands out in bold relief, but his *magnum opus*, indeed the *magnum opus* of the period, was his Dictionary, a marvel of industry though not a work to promote much mental development. Lower down in the scale between 1700 and 1750 we have Garth, Rowe, Prior, Congreve, Blackmore, Fenton, Tickell, Savage, a race who had their rank assigned them in the great lexicographer's Lives of the Poets, and it was anything but an elevated rank. From 1750 to 1800, however, the tide began to turn; the imaginative faculty revived; Gray, Collins, Goldsmith,

Cowper and Robert Burns, wrote simultaneously with Mrs. Barbauld, Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, Jane Austen and Joanna Baillie, and brought English readers from a dull, depressing atmosphere into a bracing air and bright sunshine. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the improvement continued; the second, third, fourth and fifth decades were brightened by such a constellation as had not been seen for a long time. Subsequently there has been again declension in the influence exercised by individual writers though probably not in general mental activity.

Miss Hannah More.

It was amidst the discouraging influences of the dullest of these periods that the minds of Mrs. Barbauld and her earlier contemporaries were formed. Although Mrs. Barbauld is placed at the head of my list I propose to speak of all the other ladies before I enter on her life and writings. To several of them more time might have been fairly devoted; especially could a separate paper have been written on the first whom I shall introduce—Miss Hannah More. She was a friend of Mrs. Barbauld; the two ladies visited each other and exchanged pleasant letters which may

be found in their respective biographies* Miss More's father, the master of a school at Stapleton, gave his family so good an education that she and her four sisters were able to establish and carry on successfully many years a school for young ladies at Bristol. Distinguished among the sisterhood for unusual

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* "It is a pleasant fact," says Mrs. Ellis in her Life of Mrs. Barbauld, vol. i., p. 83, "that that excellent woman and Mrs. Barbauld were warm and affectionate friends. They were perhaps without exception the most eminent women of their time, certainly in their order of mind and chosen train of thought without rivals; and their position in life was not dissimilar, both being interested in the instruction of the young in early years. Though differing widely on matters of religious belief and church institutions, Miss More representing the Conservative element and Mrs. Barbauld being essentially inclined to the largest liberality of view and the utmost freedom of thought and expression of opinion, yet they had many mutual interests and feelings, and their acquaintance which began in 1776 grew into a warm and lasting friendship broken only by Mrs. Barbauld's death." The following lines occur in Miss More's Poem, "Sensibility":—

> "Nor, Barbauld, shall my glowing heart refuse
> Its tribute to thy virtues or thy muse;
> This humble merit shall at least be mine,
> The poet's chaplet for thy brow to twine;
> My verse thy talents to the world shall teach
> And praise the genius it despairs to reach."

talent Hannah wrote verse at a very early age, and in 1773, the year of Mrs. Barbauld's first work, published a pastoral drama, "The Search after Happiness." Here she showed how four young damsels, weary of the world, sought the advice of a worthy shepherdess and lived very happy ever after without the intervention of the other sex. Among her accomplishments was a knowledge of landscape gardening, the benefit of which she gave to a Mr. Turner at whose beautiful house near Bristol she spent some holidays with two pupils of the school. She was then twenty-two years of age; the gentleman was nearly as old again; but an attachment arose and a marriage was agreed upon though finally broken off through the interference of friends. Mr. Turner, however, could not satisfy himself without making compensation for her relinquishment of her share of the school on her engagement to him, and, after many scruples on her part he settled an annuity which made her independent. This enabled Miss More to realise one of the curiously prophetic sports of her childhood—"riding to London to see bishops and booksellers." But her chief desire now was to see David Garrick and know Dr. Johnson, pleasures which good introductions from her Bristol friends made easily attainable. During her London

visits one and sometimes two of her sisters abode with her; Miss Reynolds, the hospitable sister and housekeeper of Sir Joshua, was among her friends; and, aided by her, the Bristol ladies became acquainted with many celebrities. Ere long Hannah was a frequent inmate in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Garrick, much esteemed by both. The great actor was accustomed to call her Nine, saying that in her were combined the Nine Muses. With Dr. Johnson she was an especial favorite, partly it is alleged because her compliments were unstinted though probably sincere. Then her ready wit, her unfailing vivacity, together with higher qualities caused her society to be sought at various periods of life by men like Burke, Horace Walpole, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Kennicott, William Wilberforce, and Bishop Porteous, and by such women as Mrs. Barbauld, Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Mrs. Chapone. At this period with a spirit for which those who only knew her later writings would scarcely give her credit she wrote plays for Drury Lane Theatre, one of which, "Percy," by the aid of her friend Garrick's histrionic power maintained its hold upon the public fourteen successive nights. Biographers relate how pleased the great Northumberland

family were with the references to them in the play, and how, though the Duke and his eldest son being both ill with gout were unable to attend the first representation, each took a ticket, "paying as became the blood of the Percys."

But this phase of life was not to last always. Hannah More had feelings and principles which were not satisfied in London. "Nine, you are a Sunday woman," said Garrick to her on one occasion of music being introduced at his house on a Sunday, "go to your room and we will send for you." When about forty years of age she adopted more decided religious views, resolved to forsake fashionable life altogether, and took up her abode with her sisters in a cottage at Wrington, in Somersetshire, known by the rural name of Cowslip Green. She had previously published her "Sacred Dramas," plays in imitation of those of Metastasio, founded on some of the events of the Bible, and now she took a bolder flight in her "Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society," which was followed by "An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World" and many other works on kindred topics. Nor did she content herself with writing for the good of mankind. From the time of their settlement at

Cowslip Green she and her sisters gave themselves to works of love and mercy. Their house was about ten miles from Cheddar, where the beautiful scenery attracted innumerable visitors, but the ignorance and depravity of the inhabitants would now scarcely be believed. "Wherever we turn," says Miss Yonge, "in almost every part of England we hear legends of the frightful neglect and inefficiency of the clergy at the end of the last century. Cheddar seems to have been unusually unfortunate: the incumbents absent, the curates serving three or four parishes at once, intoxication common among them as well as the farmers, and the moral degradation of the peasantry almost verging on savagery."* Aided by Mr. Wilberforce the ladies of Cowslip Green became missionaries in the district. They hired rooms, established schools, got up benefit clubs, talked with the farmers and their wives, and distributed books suited to the various classes. In addition to smaller village festivals (for they wisely provided amusements) they had a great annual celebration called the Mendip Feast when all the schools met on the top of the hills to play country games and eat roast beef and plum pudding. Other

* "Biographies of Good Women," Second Series, p 306.

parts of the district eventually profited in some degree by these pious labours, but incredible as it may now seem the difficulties were immense arising from the misrepresentation of some of the clergy and even the opposition of some of the magistrates. All this time Miss More continued to write,—her practical benevolence largely increasing the interest and usefulness of her books. So great was their success financially that after devoting a large portion of her income to charitable purposes she accumulated the sum of thirty thousand pounds. The sisters were also prosperous, and out of the profits of their school built a house in Pulteney Street, Bath, which was the winter residence of all of them until Cowslip Green was exchanged for Barley Wood, a charming abode in the same parish of Wrington. In Pulteney Street Miss More, who had often visited Bath, renewed and strengthened her friendships in that city, and there she was visited by many distinguished people whom fashion or ill-health had brought to the springs. At Barley Wood, amidst influences in harmony with her own pure spirit, Miss More saw all her sisters pass away at various intervals. But she herself was not permitted to end her days in the house she loved. Aged and alone she suffered from the ingratitude and

misconduct of her household, and in her eighty-third year removed to Clifton. She lived five years longer, dying in 1833. What she did, how high was her ideal of Christian duty her life and writings testify. Of the women of the time England owes to her more perhaps than to any. And if Somersetshire should ever have a gallery devoted to its greatest benefactors, who would deserve a higher place than Hannah More?

Miss Jane Austen.

A younger writer, and sooner called away, was Miss Jane Austen, who, like Miss More, knew our city well. The daughter of the Rector of Steventon in Hampshire, she was born there in 1775, lived in Bath with her family from 1801 to 1805, and removed first to Southampton and then to Chawton in the same county. Under her father's care she received a sound education and acquired a fair acquaintance with English literature, her favourite authors being Johnson, Richardson, Cowper and Crabbe. She knew French well and Italian slightly, had some taste in music and was noted for skill in needlework. With personal attractions and a sweet temper, she was a great favourite among her young

relatives whom she delighted by a wonderful power of extemporising narratives. Of this power her pen as well as her voice became the instrument. In 1796, at the age of twenty-one, she wrote "Pride and Prejudice," and in the two following years "Sense and Sensibility" and "Northanger Abbey." But a long time elapsed before these works were published. The author was unknown; booksellers were dull or timid; sensational works—such as Mrs. Radcliffe's Udolpho, Godwin's Caleb Williams, and Lewis's Monk had lowered the public taste. "Pride and Prejudice" was offered to publishers, specially to Cadell, and rejected. At length some bolder spirit in Bath gave ten pounds for "Northanger Abbey" but never printed it, and, weary with waiting, the author bought it back. All this time she received any thing but encouragement from the tone of society as to literary ladies. A passage in Miss Harriet Martineau's Autobiography shows the feeling that prevailed. "When I was young, it was not thought proper for young ladies to study very conspicuously; and especially with pen in hand. Young ladies (at least in provincial towns) were expected to sit down in the parlour to sew,—during which reading aloud was permitted,—or to practice their music; but so as to be fit to receive

callers, without any signs of blue stockingism which could be reported abroad. Jane Austen herself, the Queen of novelists, the immortal creator of Anne Elliott, Mr. Knightley, and a score or two more of unrivalled intimate friends of the whole public, was compelled by the feelings of her family to cover up her manuscripts with a large piece of muslin work, kept on the table for the purpose, whenever any genteel people came in."* Fame, however, though slow-footed in her case, came eventually. When more than another decade had passed the manuscripts which had been long laid aside were revised and offered with success. A purer and healthier taste had been awakened. True pictures of quiet, natural life, yet rich in imaginative power, were found to bear comparison with thrilling and mysterious romances. "Sense and Sensibility" appeared first, though not till 1811, fourteen years after it was written. For this Miss Austen is said to have received a hundred and fifty pounds. In 1813 came "Pride and Prejudice," in 1814 "Mansfield Park," in 1816 "Emma." These four were published anonymously. "Northanger Abbey" and "Persuasion"

* Autobiography, Vol. i., p. 100.

followed with the Author's name after her death. Early in 1816 her strength began to fail; she sought change of air and scene at Winchester, but quickly passed away at the age of forty-two. She was buried in the Cathedral. Lord Macaulay at one time intended to write her life, and devote the profits to a monument. Among her papers were found several short tales and fragments of larger works, written some of them at a very early age when she began to exercise her faculty of composition. To herself the enjoyment of the high reputation she had so well earned was short; to her friends it yet continues. Perhaps her works never were and never will be highly popular. It requires a cultivated taste to appreciate the rare skill with which the scanty materials of her tales are handled. That she did so much in so short a space; that what she did was done altogether so admirably; that the tone of her writings was such as to correct many of the evils of the time—all this should be gratefully remembered. And no testimony can be higher than that which abounds as to her place in Literature. Miss Martineau, we have seen, styled her the Queen of Novelists. Archbishop Whately compares her works for their truth and life to the carefully painted pictures

of the Dutch School. Sir Walter Scott thus writes in his Diary:—"I read and for the third time Miss Austen's very finely written novel of Pride and Prejudice. That young lady had a talent for describing the feelings, characters, and involvements of ordinary life the most wonderful I ever met with. The big wow-wow I can do myself like any one going, but the exquisite touch which renders commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth and description of the sentiment is denied to me. What a pity that so gifted a creature died so early!" One more extract from the elegant pen of Lord Morpeth, afterwards Earl of Carlisle, in a well-known Annual, "The Keepsake of 1825." The lines accompany an illustration of a lady reading a novel, and refer to some of the popular writers of the time:—

"Beats thy quick pulse o'er Inchbald's thrilling leaf,
Brunton's high moral, Opie's deep wrought grief?
Has the mild chaperon claimed thy yielding heart,
Carroll's dark page, Trevelyan's gentle art?
Or is it thou all perfect Austen? Here
Let one poor wreath adorn thy early bier,
That scarce allowed thy modest youth to claim
Its living portion of thy certain fame."*

* Rev. J. Austen Leigh's Life of his Aunt, Miss Austen.
Lockhart's Life of Scott, Vol. iii., p. 292.
Encyclopædia Britannica, Vol. iii., p. 101.
Edinburgh Review, Vol. li., p. 448.

Miss Edgeworth.

No name of the period is more familiar even to the present generation than Maria Edgeworth. Born in 1767 and dying in 1849 she filled a large space in the public mind and won admiration which has not yet ceased. The best edition of her works is in fourteen volumes; they are chiefly fictions of a mild, practical character, intended to correct prevailing errors in education and morality. When she had a new work ready for the press she was accustomed to ask her father to give a preface to it, which he did, stating its particular object. In the preface to the "Tales of Fashionable Life," he writes, "all the parts of this series bear upon the faults and virtues of different ages and classes, and they have all arisen from that view of society which we have laid before the public in more didactic works on Education."* He then proceeds to state what was aimed at chiefly in the "Parent's Assistant," and what in "Moral and Popular Tales." Mr. Edgeworth's connection with his daughter's works, slight as it was, did not always recommend them. Notwithstanding many good

* Miss Edgeworth's Works, Ed.: 1825, vol viii., p. 3,

qualities when in the midst of his large family and tenantry, he annoyed acquaintances in London by excessive zeal for pet projects. His manners in society made him somewhat unpopular. On one occasion he offended Mrs. Siddons at a dinner party so as to excite general observation.* This led Mrs. Ellis to remark "Perhaps Mrs. Siddons would have joined the society proposed I think by Lord Byron for the suppression of that excellent man Mr. Edgeworth who was very trying in many ways, though four charming women were successively so interested as to marry him.†" On the other side we have, naturally, in Miss Edgeworth's memoirs of her father much that is pleasant. She describes with great warmth his admiration of the writings of Mrs. Barbauld "for their classic strength and elegance, for their high tone of moral and religious feeling and for their practical useful tendency." Mrs. Barbauld

* The anecdote is related in a conversation of Crabb Robinson with Mrs. Barbauld—Diary vol. i. 217—"'Madam,' said Mr. E. to Mrs. Siddons, 'I saw you act Millamont thirty-five years ago. 'Pardon me Sir' she answered stiffly and coldly. 'Oh then it was forty years ago.' 'You mistake sir, I never acted the character,' and then turning to Tom Moore she said 'I think it is time I should change my place,' and with great solemnity she left her seat."

† Life of Mrs. Barbauld, page 284.

visited the family on several occasions and corresponded frequently with Miss Edgeworth. Returning to the amiable Irishwoman's own writings our admiration may be qualified. While we are not surprised at the eminence she attained, we yet feel that there is some truth in Rogers's remark that "she is a schoolmistress in her tales."* Equally pertinent is Crabb Robinson's, "Her sketches of ordinary life are full of good sense, but the tendency of her writings to check enthusiasm of every kind is of problematical value."† On the other hand Mr. Burke said in the House of Commons with reference to some adverse criticism, "In defence of Miss Edgeworth ten thousand pens would start from their inkstands." Less enthusiastic and on other accounts more valuable is the opinion of Sir Walter Scott, given by Mr. Lockhart in his description of a visit paid by the baronet and

* Crabb Robinson—Diary vol. i. p. 144—writes of a conversation with Rogers "His most solid remark was on literary women. How strange it is that while we men are modestly content to amuse by our writings, women must be didactic! Miss Baillie writes plays to illustrate the passions, Miss Martineau teaches political economy by tales, Mrs. Marcet sets up for a general instructor, not only in her dialogues but in fairy stories and Miss Edgeworth is a schoolmistress in her tales."

† Crabb Robinson's Diary, Third Edition, vol. i. p 208.

his son-in-law to Edgeworthstown. "A happy meeting it was: we remained there several days, making excursions to various scenes of interest; the gentry exerting themselves with true Irish zeal to signalise their affectionate pride in their illustrious countrywoman and the high appreciation of her guest, while her brother Mr. Lovell Edgeworth had his classical mansion filled every evening with a succession of distinguished friends, the *élite* of Ireland." He then speaks of "the delight with which Sir Walter contemplated his friend's position in the midst of her own large and happy domestic circle," and proceeds to say that in the view she took of the true work of Poets and Novelists, drawing inspiration not more from the beauties and glories of the outward world than from the every-day duties and charities of life, he hailed her as a sister spirit, who made every thing subservient to the education of the heart. It was in one of those walks in the park of Edgeworthstown, after Scott had combatted something Lockhart had said depreciating authorship, that Miss Edgeworth, addressing Lockhart, paid his relative the flattering compliment: "You see how it is—Dean Swift said he had written his books in order that people might learn to treat him like a great lord; Sir Walter writes

his in order that he may be able to treat his people as a great lord ought to do."*

There is a passage in the autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher which, written by a woman so discerning and yet so perfectly fair, may lead to a right judgment of Miss Edgeworth.

"In the spring of 1823 Maria Edgeworth and her two younger sisters spent some time in Edinburgh. We met first at my dear friend and pastor's house, the Rev. Mr. Alison. It was the first time I had been introduced to the author of "Simple Susan." . . . Miss Edgeworth's personal appearance was not attractive; but her vivacity, good humour and cleverness in conversation quite equalled my expectations. I should say she was more sprightly and brilliant than refined. She excelled in the raciness of Irish humour, but the great defect of her manner as it seemed to me was an excess of compliment or what in Ireland is called 'blarney,' and in one who had moved in the best circles, both as to manners and mind, it surprised me not a little. She repelled all approach to intimacy on my part by the excess of her complimentary reception of me when we were first introduced to each other at Mr. Alison's. I never felt confidence in the reality of what she said afterwards. I do not know whether it was the absence of good taste in her, or that she supposed I was silly and vain enough to be flattered by such verbiage. It was the first time in my life I had

* Lockhart's Life, vol. viii. p. 28.

met with such over-acted civility; but I was glad of an opportunity of meeting a person whose genius and powers of mind had been exercised in benefitting the world as hers have been. I feel sure from the feeling of those friends who loved her, because they knew her well, that had this been the case with me, I might also have been one of her friends; so that I only give my impression as arising from that of social intercourse of a very superficial kind. Miss Edgeworth and her two very agreeable sisters were pleased to meet at our house Sir Robert and Lady Liston. They accompanied us some days after this to dine at Millburn Tower, the Liston's country house near Edinburgh. Miss Edgeworth's varied information and quick repartee appeared to great advantage in conversation with the polished ex-ambassador of Constantinople, who always reminded me of the couplet—

'Polite as all his life in courts had been;
Yet good, as he the world had never seen.'"*

MRS. MARCET.

The next name on my list is Mrs. Marcet. I introduce it here partly because she, like Miss Edgeworth, wrote admirable books for young people. Miss Martineau in her Biographical Sketches says, "Mrs. Barbauld's Early Lessons were good; Miss Edgeworth's were better, but Mrs. Marcet's are transcendant

* Life of Mrs. Fletcher, p. 156.

as far as they go."* Another reason for giving this lady a prominent place among the writers of the period is that her works took a wider range than those of many of her contemporaries. With a very modest estimate of her own powers, not professing to do more than write for young people, she yet succeeded in making various scientific subjects generally intelligible and popular. Her "Conversations" on Chemistry, on Political Economy, on Natural Philosophy and on Vegetable Physiology were all valuable books in their day, opening in many cases an entirely fresh region of ideas, introducing science among large classes to whom it was utterly unknown. She did not begin to write early for the public as literary women generally do. Born in 1769 she was between forty and fifty before her first work appeared. Dr. Marcet's high repute as a physician and experimental chemist placed her in the midst of scientific and literary society which could not fail to stimulate her mind. And while it was under her husband's counsel and guidance that she applied herself to authorship, the fortune she inherited about the same time from her father Mr. Haldimand an opulent merchant, Swiss

* Ed.: 1869, page 389.

by birth but settled in London, made writing still more a labour of love. We are told that " she never overrated her own books nor consciously her own knowledge; she sought information from learned persons, believed she understood what she was told and generally did so; wrote down in a clear, cheerful, serviceable style what she had to tell, submitted it to criticism, accepted criticism gaily and always protested against being ranked with authors of original quality, whether discoverers in science or thinkers in literature." Against the criticism of Mr. Rogers quoted in a preceding page may be placed a vindication of feminine Literature generally, written forty-seven years ago by Lord Jeffery in the *Edinburgh Review* in which he refers to Mrs. Marcet " When women have turned their minds, as they have done but too seldom, to the exposition or arrangement of any branch of knowledge, they have commonly exhibited, we think, a more beautiful accuracy, and a more uniform and complete justness of thinking than their less discriminating brethren." . . " No *man* we will venture to say could have written the letters of Madame de Sevigné, or the novels of Miss Austen or the hymns and early lessons of Mrs. Barbauld, or the conversations of Mrs. Marcet. These works are,

in our judgment, not only essentially feminine but decidedly more perfect than any masculine productions with which they can be brought into comparison."* With regard to Mrs. Marcet it may be added that before she passed away in her ninetieth year, in 1858, her works had become the text books in many hundreds of schools and her pupils in the new world as well as the old could be numbered by thousands. She had the happiness of seeing a progress which at the beginning of her useful life she could not have anticipated, but which she certainly did much to quicken: great discoveries in Chemistry; a new phase in Natural Philosophy; the old Poor Law abolished and Free Trade established; with the wide admission of the duty, though not then the complete adoption of the practice of Universal Education.†

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* Ed.: Review, vol. 1., p. 33.

† "It was in the autumn of 1827, I think, that a neighbour lent my sister Mrs. Marcet's 'Conversations on Political Economy.' I took up the book chiefly to see what Political Economy precisely was; and great was my surprise to find that I had been teaching it unawares in my stories about Machinery and Wages. It struck me at once that the principles of the whole science might be advantageously conveyed in the same way—not by being smothered up in a story, but by being exhibited in their natural workings in selected passages of social life." H. Martineau's Autobiography, vol. i. p. 138.

Miss Mitford.

A different path again was that of Mary Russell Mitford. She was an only child, born at Alresford in Hampshire, in 1786, seventeen years after Mrs. Marcet. Her father was by profession a physician, one of the Northumberland family of Mitfords, an incurably extravagant man. He is said to have run through half a dozen fortunes, shifted about to half a dozen grand houses and at length owed his means of subsistence chiefly to his daughter's talent and industry. Just after one great failure of his means, when the family was living in London and Mary was only ten years of age she chose for a birthday present a lottery ticket which brought her a prize of £20,000. Dr. Mitford soon wasted this as he had done some £40,000 previously. While he was amusing himself with building a large house four miles from Reading the young lady returned from School at the age of fifteen to write poetry and dream of becoming an authoress. At twenty four she appeared in print and after 1810 she put forth a volume almost every year —at first with no particular wish to earn money but afterwards as a means of support for the family. In their poverty they went to lodge for a summer in a village near Reading and there they lived for the rest

of Dr. Mitford's long life. The poetess looked round her and described what she saw, sending the papers which, collected, form the celebrated "Our Village," to Campbell for the New Monthly Magazine. He however rejected them and it was in the "Lady's Magazine" they first appeared. They were published in a collected form in 1823 and from that time Miss Mitford was sure of ample remuneration whenever she chose to draw for it in the shape of pleasant stories under her well-known and welcome signature. Few of her many readers however knew at what cost these pleasant stories were produced. They seem to flow easily enough and their sportive style suggests anything but the toil and anxiety amidst which they were spun out. Each story is as complete and rounded as a sonnet and provided with a plot which would serve for a novel if expanded. Each has a catastrophe, generally a surprise, elaborately worked out in concealment. It was for stories of this kind Miss Mitford exchanged the earlier and easier sketches from the nature around her which we find in "Our Village" and the exchange increased immensely the call upon er energies. At that time the "Annuals" had a large sale and paid handsomely; for them the devoted daughter wrote year after year with great

success; and "thus she employed her talents, spoiling her father and wearing herself out, but delighting an enormous number of readers."* She died in 1855.

Miss Jane Porter.

Two more novelists have to be introduced here—Miss Jane Porter and Miss Burney, afterwards Madame D'Arblay. To Miss Jane Porter's genius and character an entire evening might be most pleasantly devoted. By the readers of thirty, forty and fifty years ago few books were devoured with greater delight than the "Scottish Chiefs" and "Thaddeus of Warsaw." Probably they do not kindle the same enthusiasm now though new editions are still issued in our own and other languages in various parts of the world. Miss Porter maintained her great popularity, while she did not increase it, by "The Pastor's Fireside," by various contributions to Annuals and Magazines, and late in life by "Sir Edward Seward's Narrative." The last work, published anonymously, while really a clever fiction, had so much the appearance of genuine description that people everywhere hunted out their atlasses to ascertain where the scene was situated.

* Biographical Sketches, p. 353.

The joy in the literary success of this admirable woman was largely shared by her family. Her father died early, and on his death her mother removed to Edinburgh where the inspiration of the "Scottish Chiefs" was caught. In "Thaddeus of Warsaw" the hero is really Kosciusko, the pupil of Washington, and immortalised by Campbell. So life-like are all the scenes of the book that the world believed the author must have lived in Poland instead of writing as she did at that time in a London street. Her sister Miss Maria Porter was also a novelist of considerable repute; and the youngest brother, Sir Robert Ker Porter was a very distinguished member of the family. By some now present he was known and appreciated as an artist, though more than one generation have passed away since London was excited by the special exhibition of his wonderful panorama, the Siege of Seringapatam painted when he was a student of nineteen in the Royal Academy. This work brought him fame as a painter; his travels in Persia as an author; his service in the army as a soldier; his negociations at various courts as a diplomatist. It was in the year 1842 that Miss Jane Porter, bowed down by age and many sorrows, sought comfort in a visit to him at St.

Petersburgh where he had resided for many years, having married a Russian Princess who had died some time previously. The brother and sister resolved to return to England together; everything was arranged for their departure; Sir Robert had paid his last visit; it was to the Emperor, who had always treated him as a friend; on his return from the Palace he drove home, but when the servant opened the door of the carriage he was dead. Miss Porter died at the house of another brother in Bristol in 1850.

MADAME D'ARBLAY.

Little Fanny Burney as Dr. Johnson was accustomed to call her was first made much of in London society as the author of "Evelina." She also had kindred of some note: her father Dr. Burney, the historian of Music, contrived in his small dwelling in Poland Street to collect eminent devotees of his beloved art; and her brother Captain Burney (who became an Admiral) circumnavigated the world with Captain Cook and wrote a history of the circumnavigation. Crabb Robinson mentions the brother as a humorous old man, who gave agreeable whist parties where he often met Charles Lamb and William

Hazlitt until Hazlitt wrote an offensive criticism of the sister's writings in the "Edinburgh Review." Going back to "Evelina" it is amusing to read of the wonderment of the Literati as to who could possibly be the author. In those days such questions were discussed by reading people as vehemently as the Eastern Question is by politicians in our own. Mrs. Barbauld refers to another novel by Miss Burney "Cecilia" in a letter to Dr Aikin, remarking that she had met the author and found her "a very unaffected, sweet and modest young lady."* The Diary published after her death gives the same impression, and being written in a much more natural style than the memoirs of her father was welcomed as a very pleasant book. Nowhere do we find more vivid pictures of the literary society of the time. Dr. Burney was known to Mrs. Thrale, who lived at Streatham, and was delighted to have the author of "Evelina" as a visitor. Thus was a friendship formed with Dr. Johnson of which she was naturally very proud and thus she became known to Mrs. Montagu, mentioned in the Diary, as "the glory of her sex." To be one of the first party

* Mrs. Ellis's Life of Mrs. Barbauld, p. 115.

invited to the glorious lady's grand new house, of which all London talked, and to have her praises sounded by the brilliant circle assembled in its halls, are duly recorded as great encouragements to one on the first step of the ladder of fame. Though we smile at the minute account of all this, and at much of the conversation at the Streatham dinners, on subjects no more profound than the dishes the lexicographer loved and the dresses worn at the last drawing room, we yet enjoy the wit which seldom failed to flow freely and never gave pain to Miss Burney. In addition to many lively stories of the literary and musical phenomena of the time we have in the Diary the autobiography of the writer, and a very curious autobiography it is. There we learn how in an evil hour she who had won her way to fame so quickly, who had been welcomed in all the best circles so heartily, who had received (a large sum in those days) £2,000 for her first work, stooped to accept the office of Keeper of the robes to Queen Charlotte, selling herself to bondage for two hundred pounds a year. There we learn how, after enduring this bondage five years, during which she noted down the caprices and littlenesses of her royal mistress, and the sad approaches of the poor king's

malady and the palace opinions about the political events of the time, she at length escaped, though not without ruined health and a broken spirit. There however we also learn how she was restored by congenial society, becoming acquainted with General D'Arblay, one of the French exiles who had been driven to England by the Revolution, and persuading herself to marry the handsome soldier, with no better fortune than a precarious annuity of a hundred pounds a year.* She lived a long time in France with her husband, and after his death spent some years in Bath, I believe in Green Park Buildings, where she died in 1840 in her eighty-eighth year. "The news of her death," says a reviewer of the Diary "carried the minds of men back at one leap clear over two generations. All those whom we had been accustomed to revere as literary patriarchs seemed children when compared with her; for Burke had sat up all night to read her writings and Johnson had pronounced her superior to Fielding when Rogers was still a schoolboy and Southey in petticoats." Rogers in his "Table Talk" gives an anecdote of the pleasant old lady which shows how highly they

* "Edinburgh Review," vol. lxxvi., p. 523.

both appreciated Mrs. Barbauld. He says, "I know few lines finer than a stanza on Life" composed by Mrs. Barbauld when she was very old:—

"Life, we've been long together
Through pleasant and through stormy weather;
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear:
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;
Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time;
Say not Good Night, but in some brighter clime
Bid me good Morning."

Sitting with Madame D'Arblay, some weeks before she died, Rogers said to her, "Do you remember those lines of Mrs. Barbauld's 'Life' which I once repeated to you?" "Remember them," she replied, "I repeat them to myself every night before I go to bed."*

* Mrs. Ellis's Life, p. 114.

Crabb Robinson gives a similar anecdote in connection with Wordsworth. He was visiting the poet at Rydal and was asked by him to repeat the stanza Madame D'Arblay had so much admired. Robinson repeated it, and Wordsworth, at once learning it by heart, said "I am not in the habit of grudging other people their good things but I wish I had written those lines."—"Crabb Robinson's Diary," Third Edition, vol. i., p. 119.

Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu.

A name which though well known in Mrs. Barbauld's time is by no means familiar now. The lady had a large fortune, was very generous in various ways, and is represented in Madame D'Arblay's Diary as "the first woman for literary knowledge in England." As a writer she was known for her "Three Dialogues of the Dead" and her "Essay on the Genius and Learning of Shakespeare" whom she vigorously defended from the illiberal attacks of Voltaire Hannah More speaks of her as "not only the finest genius but the finest lady she ever saw, yet with a form delicate even to fragility, a countenance the most animated in the world, and a mind combining the vivacity of fifteen with the judgment of a Nestor.* Dr. Johnson, discussing her merits with Mrs. Thrale said "she diffused more knowledge in conversation than any man or woman he knew" on which Mrs. Thrale rejoined "and you who love magnificence won't quarrel with her as every one else does for her love of finery."†

At her splendid house in Portman Square, of which I have spoken, she entertained hospitably all the

* "Lives of Good Women," second series, p. 297.

† "Madame D'Arblay's Diary," vol. i., p. 97.

most gifted men and women of the day; and so wide were her sympathies that while cultivating strong friendships with celebrities like Lord Orford, Lord Lyttleton, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Horace Walpole, Dr. Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, Mrs. Barbauld, Miss Hannah More, Miss Burney, and Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, she gave annual dinners on May Day for many years to the chimney sweepers of London. It was Mrs. Montagu who founded the literary society known as the Blue Stocking Club, the title, it is said, originating in the remark of a Frenchman, that "so little was thought of dress at the meetings that ladies might go to them in blue stockings without being observed."* After the death of Mrs. Montagu four

* I remember an anecdote of a Dowager Lady Cork whose hospitality was also proverbial: when her invitation was on pink paper you might expect people of the world, men and women who would mix no abstruse argumentation with her ladyship's champagne; if it was a blue note you knew your destiny was in the other direction —high converse with the Literati and the Savans of the day. Lady Cork was the Hon. Miss Monckton, daughter of Viscount Galway, and married in 1786 to the Earl of Cork and Orrery. From a notice in the Diary of Madame D'Arblay, vol. ii., p. 432, she appears to have died about 1841. She is first referred to in the Diary sixty years previously. Her literary parties "continued to be as singular and celebrated" as they were at that time.

volumes of her epistolary correspondence were published by her nephew. They reveal much of her inner life and show that she was very good, very clever, very useful, but certainly not very happy.

Miss Berry.

Next comes Miss Berry who died in 1852, like Mrs. Marcet, at the age of ninety. Miss Martineau says of her, " She was remarkable enough in herself to have excited a good deal of emotion by dying any time within the last seventy years. Dying now, she leaves as strong as ever the impression of her admirable faculties, her generous and affectionate nature and her high accomplishments, while awakening us to a retrospect of the changes and fashions of our English intellect as expressed by Literature. She was not only the Woman of Letters of the last century, carried far forward into our own; she was not only the Woman of Fashion who was familiar with the gaieties of life before the fair daughters of George III. were seen abroad, and who had her own will and way with society up to her death; she was the repository of the whole literary history of four-score years, and when she was pleased to throw open the folding doors of

her memory they were found to be mirrors, and in them was seen the whole procession of Literature from the mournful Cowper to Tennyson the Laureate."* The same writer draws a picture of the two Miss Berrys chatting on the same sofa with their constant companion Lady Charlotte Lindsay, the daughter of Lord North, and at one time in the suite of Queen Caroline. We are told that though these ladies brought into our time a good deal of the dress, the manners, and the conversation of the last century it was not at all in a way to cast any restraint on the youngest of their visitors or to check the inclination to inquire into the thoughts and ways of men long dead. It was said Miss Berry's parties were rather blue, and perhaps they were so; but she was not aware of it; and all thought of contemporary pedantry dissolved under her stories of how she once found on the table, on her return from a ball, a volume of "Plays of the Passions," and how she kneeled on a chair at the table to see what the book was like, and was found there—feathers and satin shoes and all—by the servant who came to let in the winter morning light.

* "Biographical Sketches," p. 294.

The name of Miss Berry is frequently associated with that of Horace Walpole, afterwards Earl of Orford. In accordance with his will she prepared a complete edition of his works published in five volumes in 1798. The intimacy which led to this began ten years previously when the "Prince and Patriarch of Dilettanti" was in the seventy-first year of his age and the very agreeable lady twenty-five. She and her sister were his neighbours at Twickenham; he liked both so well that he would probably have married either, though his preference was decidedly for the elder. The refusal by the ladies did not diminish his desire to improve their position, so that he bequeathed to them the house in which they resided, "Little Strawberry Hill," and a small legacy in money. This association with the name and memory of the lineal representative of one of the greatest of English names, a nobleman who, with whatever reputation for trifling, was also regarded as a high authority in Literature and Art, would have constituted (says a Reviewer) "an excellent introduction in most European capitals had the Miss Berrys needed one. But their social position was rather recognised and confirmed than strengthend by him. Go where they would they seemed to have a natural

affinity and attraction for the most cultivated society of the place. Mary, especially, the loadstone of the house, seldom failed to draw into their circle the persons best worth knowing, as well as the celebrities —the hero, the orator, the author, the artist, the wit, the beauty of the hour; and this was done spontaneously as it were and without an effort by purely personal qualities, by ready sympathy, frank appreciation, sense, knowledge, and simplicity. It was they who sought her, not she them. The Iron Duke grows talkative when seated next her at the dinner table; Lord Byron lays himself out to please her; Joanna Baillie is grateful for her critical approval; Canova approaches her with the strongest expressions of regard and esteem; the Princess of Wales (Queen Caroline) tries hard for the cover of her respectability; Sydney Smith looks over one of her proposed publications and Mackintosh another; Madame Recamier eagerly solicits her friendship and Madame de Stael declares that she had thought her the cleverest woman in England."*

All this, and much more that is extremely interesting, we learn from the "Extracts from the Journals and Correspondence of Miss Berry" in 3 vols., edited

* "Edinburgh Review," Vol. cxxii., p. 298.

by Lady Theresa Lewis. In addition to the proofs of literary skill developed in these volumes and in the editions of Horace Walpole's works (though the latter was published without her name) there are others in her edition of "Madame du Deffand's Letters" (1810), her "Life of Lady Rachel Russell" (1819), and her "England and France, a comparative view of the Social Condition of both countries" (1831). Contemporary criticism was not invariably favourable to these works. In reply to the remark of Lady Theresa Lewis that it was as an author Miss Berry should be judged by the public, the Edinburgh Reviewer says:—

"We cannot subscribe to this doctrine unless the composition of her journal is to count for authorship. She was certainly better than her book, and she strikes us as offering another instance, amongst many, of persons highly gifted with social powers and attractions whose reputation is not maintained by their set efforts with the pen."*

Certainly whatever her literary abilities may have been she was pre-eminent in conversation; with a winning manner and remarkable fluency of expression she combined an acute discernment, a wide range of knowledge and a wonderful memory. Not only successive generations of authors had been reckoned

* "Edinburgh Review," cxxii. 330.

amongst her friends, but successive phases of thought and fashion in literary matters had come within her intellectual ken.

"Just as she was entering on the novel-reading age, 'Evelina' came out, and Fanny Burney's series of novels were to that generation of young people what Scott's were to the next but one. If the youths and maidens of that time had bad fiction, they had good history, for the learned Mr. Gibbon gave them volume after volume which made them proud of their age. They talked about their poets; and no doubt, each had an idol in that day as in ours and everybody's. The earnestness, sense, feeling, and point of Cowper delighted some; and they reverently told of the sorrows of his secluded life, as glimpses were caught of him in his walks with Mrs. Unwin. Others stood on tiptoe to peep into Dr. Darwin's 'chaise' as he went his professional round, writing and polishing his verses as he went; and his admirers insisted that nothing so brilliant had ever been written before. Miss Berry must have well remembered the first exhibition of this brilliancy before the careless eyes of the world; and she must have remembered the strangeness of the contrast when Crabbe tried his homely pathos, encouraged to do so by Burke." * * * * *

"She saw the rise of Wordsworth's fame, growing as it did out of the reaction against the pomps and vanities of the Johnsonian and Darwinian schools; and she lived to see its decline when the great purpose was fulfilled, of inducing

poets to say what they mean, in words which will answer that purpose. She saw the beginning and the end of Moore's popularity; and the rise and establishment of Campbell's. The short career of Byron passed before her eyes like a summer storm; and that of Scott constituted a great interest of her life for many years. What an experience to have studied the period of horrors, represented by Monk Lewis—of conventionalism in Fanny Burney—of metaphysical fiction in Godwin—of historical romance in Scott—and of a new order of fiction in Dickens, which it is yet too soon to characterise by a phrase! * * * * * *

One would like to know how she herself summed up such an experience as hers—the spectacle of so many everlasting things dissolved—so many engrossing things forgotten—so many settled things set afloat again, and floated out of sight. Perhaps those true words wandered once more into her mind as her eyes were closing.*

'We are such stuff
As dreams are made of; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.'"

Miss Joanna Baillie.

I have alluded to the "Plays of the Passions." We must not omit the lady who wrote *them*. Wordsworth once said of her, "If I had to present any one to a foreigner as a model of an English gentlewoman it

* "Biographical Sketches," p. 298.

would be Joanna Baillie."* To her high rank in the world of letters there is a cloud of witnesses whose testimony is beyond doubt. Scott, Wordsworth, Southey, Byron, Coleridge, all differing in their own style and sentiments, unite in praising her. So great was her reserve, so unassuming her entire character that it was some time before she was known to be the author of the plays, which were published anonymously, though the dedication to her brother Dr. Baillie (the celebrated physician and uncle of Chief Justice Denman) might have given a hint to eager inquirers. Miss Lucy Aikin happened to be at Mrs. Barbauld's house when Miss Baillie made a call, and it was just after the book came out; Mrs. Barbauld having no idea who had written it was emphatic in her admiration, but the Scottish damsel was as self-possessed as her great countryman—the author of Waverley and gave no sign.† Nor when at length the secret was divulged and she became the observed of all observers, when she was praised by the critics and sought in society and spoken well of everywhere, did she lose any of her native humility. Further we

* Crabb Robinson, i., 386.

† Mrs. Ellis's Life, p. 232.

learn that she was equal to the reverses as well as the successes of literary life. Miss Martineau's opinion on this point may be quoted though some of the statements may be stronger than the facts actually warranted.

"And there was Joanna Baillie, whose serene and cheerful life was never troubled by the pains and penalties of vanity; —what a charming spectacle was she! Mrs. Barbauld's published correspondence tells of her, in 1800, as a 'young lady of Hampstead whom I visited, and who came to Mr. Barbauld's meeting, all the while with as innocent a face as if she had never written a line.' That was two years before I was born. When I met her, about thirty years afterwards, there she was, still 'with as innocent a face as if she had never written a line!' And this was after an experience which would have been a bitter trial to an author with a particle of vanity. She had enjoyed a fame almost without parallel, and had outlived it. She had been told every day for years, through every possible channel, that she was second only to Shakespeare,—if second; and then she had seen her works drop out of notice so that, of the generation who grew up before her eyes, not one in a thousand had read a line of her plays:—yet was her serenity never disturbed, nor her merry humour in the least dimmed."*

The testimony of an American gentleman of high position in the world of letters is valuable both for his

* "Autobiography of Harriet Martineau," Vol. i., 385.

own estimate and that of Sir Walter Scott. Writing in 1838, Mr. Ticknor says—

"We made a most delightful visit to Miss Joanna Baillie. She talked of Scott with a tender enthusiasm that was contagious, and of Lockhart with a kindness that is uncommon when coupled with his name, and which seemed only characteristic of her benevolence. It is very rare that old age, or, indeed, any age, is found so winning or agreeable. I do not wonder that Scott in his letters treats her with more deference, and writes to her with more care and beauty, than to any other of his correspondents, however high or titled."*

Miss Aikin sums up her own sketch by saying, "If there were ever human creature 'pure in the last recesses of the soul' it was surely this meek, pious, noble-minded and nobly-gifted woman, who after attaining her ninetieth year carried with her to the grave the love, the reverence, the regrets of all who had ever enjoyed the privilege of her society." Feeling all this we can understand those lines of Mrs. Barbauld anticipating though perhaps with too sanguine feeling the future triumphs of her friend's genius in new states peopled by the Anglo-Saxon race:

"Nor of the hands that swept the British Lyre
Shall fade one laurel or one note expire;

* "Life of Ticknor," Vol. ii., p. 153.

Then, loved Joanna, to admiring eyes
Thy storied groups in scenic pomp shall rise;
Their high-souled strains and Shakespeare's noble rage
Shall with alternate passion shake the stage."*

All who are familiar with the Literature immediately preceding that of our own day will remember Mrs. Opie, Mrs. Inchbald, Mrs. Chapone, Mrs. Trimmer, Mrs. Radcliffe, the Miss Lees, Mrs. Bowdler, Mrs. Delaney, Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton. I could have given

* "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven."

In connection with Mrs. Joanna Baillie I have been lately favoured with some pleasant living testimony. Mr. Justice Denman has kindly visited Bath for the purpose of distributing the Oxford Middle Class Prizes. I had the pleasure of meeting him in the evening, and knowing that he was related to Mrs. Joanna Baillie I said I presumed he was old enough to have known her. "Oh, yes," he answered, "and my visits to her at Hampstead are among my pleasantest recollections." Then he confirmed all I had ever heard as to her beautiful old age and her vigorous memory, but he added that with regard to memory her sister Mrs. Agnes Baillie who lived with her and survived her was still more remarkable. One sister was 89 when she died, the other 101. Mrs. Agnes Baillie continued to enjoy reading when she was a hundred years old, and retained what she read so wonderfully that she would give her friends the contents of a book of travels with as much freshness and minuteness as if she had just returned from the country described.

a few minutes gladly to each, and I should have liked especially to call up a few personal memories of the first—Mrs. Opie. Five and thirty years have not weakened the impression of that interesting strangely-blended old lady, with regard to whom I could easily believe all that she had been in fashionable life from all that she was in her Quaker days,—bright, playful, affectionate, full of animation in both. But I must content myself with remarking, in reference to all these contemporaries (and you will see how strongly what I say applies to Mrs. Barbauld also), that they did two things: they gave a great impulse to the Literature of the Country, and they raised considerably the mental and social position of women. Both results were probably attained to a greater extent because the efforts were comparatively quiet, because there was no sound of trumpets announcing that grand objects were aimed at; woman's work was in almost every instance done in a true womanly spirit, and the world has benefited accordingly.

PART II.

What is Literature?

After the first edition of these pages had been printed, I met with an interesting essay in answer to the above question. Certainly it had not occurred to me to state the meaning I attach to the word Literature though as there are several perhaps I ought to have done so. Charles Lamb says that he can read every thing which he calls a book, but there are things he cannot dignify with the name, and he would deny many productions to be books, though according to the advertisements, "no gentleman's library should be without them." Another writer of our own time makes the bold assertion, "Newspapers and leading articles may be all very well, but they are not Literature, and a mere journalist no matter how able or conscientious or deserving of respect he may be, is not necessarily a man of letters."* On the other hand Colonel Mure, in his History of the Literature of Greece, says he takes the term "in its primary sense of an application of

* Temple Bar, September, 1876.

letters to the records of facts and opinions;" Mr. Buckle in his "History of Civilisation," informs us that he uses "the word Literature, not as opposed to science but in its larger sense, including everything that is written" and De Quincey proposes to settle the difficulty by dividing Literature into two sections—the Literature of knowledge or instruction and the Literature of power. Histories, geographies, books of science would go into one; poems and imaginative works generally into the other. It is well remarked in the essay to which I refer that the word power is vague, as there might be power in a table of statistics skilfully presented. On the whole I agree with the essayist in preferring the definition of the Rev. Stopford Brooke, "By Literature we mean the written thoughts and feelings of intelligent men and women arranged in a way which will give pleasure to the reader." * * * "Writing is not Literature unless it gives a pleasure which arises not only from the things said but from the way in which they are said, and such pleasure is only given when the words are carefully or curiously or beautifully put together in sentences."* It may have been scarcely necessary to justify the

* Primer of English Literature.

remark in a preceding page that Mrs. Barbauld and her Contemporaries "gave a great impulse to the Literature of the Country." For whether we adopt an exclusive or a comprehensive definition, whether we consider the wide range of subjects they wrote upon or the various styles by which their writings are marked, the knowledge they communicated or the imaginative power they called into exercise, it will be admitted that this great honour fairly belongs to them.

MRS. BARBAULD'S DESCENT AND TRAINING.

I have intimated that we cannot look to the Literature of the time immediately preceding that of Mrs. Barbauld for any particularly good influences in the formation of her mind. It appears that much of the intellectual vigour by which she was distinguished may be traced to her personal history—the constant influence of the minds of her family, and the early cultivation of original powers. Where the great gift of genius is conferred it will sooner or later become manifest; but the form and degree of the manifestation must depend largely on the training of the intellect from the first, and in this respect Anna

Lætitia Aikin was unusually favoured. She belonged to a family of Nonconformists of what may be called the upper middle class, who, inheriting good gentle English blood on one side and good vigorous Scotch blood on the other, had their tastes formed on the high models of former generations and their faculties sharpened by the times in which they lived. The name Lætitia came from an ancestress who was daughter of Sir Francis Wingate of Harlington in Bedfordshire and grand-daughter of the Earl of Anglesey, Lord Privy Seal under Charles II. Miss Aikin's mother, formerly Miss Jennings, was descended from the Wingates and from one of the clergymen ejected by the Act of Uniformity. Her father Dr. Aikin was best known as Professor of a College at Warrington where he was associated with other eminent divines, one of whom was Dr. John Taylor, author of the "Hebrew Concordance," a work of great learning, much valued by Biblical scholars from that time to the present. A prominent promoter of this college was Lord Willoughby of Parham, and among those who took a warm interest in it were Roscoe the Historian, Pennant the Naturalist, John Howard the Philanthropist, Currie the Biographer of Burns, and the Heywoods and Percivals

of Manchester, whose descendants have been well known in Bath. For intercourse with minds of this class the education of Miss Aikin had well fitted her; she read both Greek and Latin Authors in the original; and with all the advantage of living in a good literary circle she shared in the social pleasures of various families around. Her letters contain frequent mention among others of two granddaughters of Dr. Taylor, the Miss Rigbys, the elder of whom, her intimate friend, married the first Dr. Parry of Summerhill, Bath, and became the mother of Sir Edward Parry the Arctic Navigator, and of Dr. Charles Parry the accomplished physician well remembered in the Bath Institution by its earlier members.* How greatly this lady was admired as well as loved before her marriage may be seen by the lines, in one of Miss Aikin's earliest poems, addressed to her when in attendance upon her mother during an illness at Buxton :—

"When blooming beauty in the noon of power,
While offered joys demand each sprightly hour,
With all that pomp of charms and winning mien
Which sure to conquer needs but to be seen;

* Author of the Life of his grandfather, the Rev. Joshua Parry of Cirencester and other works.

When she, whose name the softest love inspires,
To the hushed chamber of disease retires,
To watch and weep beside a parent's bed,
Catch the faint voice, and raise the languid head,
What mix't delight each feeling heart must warm!—
An angel's office suits an angel's form.
Thus the tall graceful column rears its head
To prop some mouldering tower with moss o'erspread,
Whose stately piles and arches yet display
The venerable traces of decay:
Thus round the wither'd trunk fresh shoots are seen
To shade their parent with a cheerful green.
More health dear maid! thy soothing presence brings
Than purest skies, or salutary springs.
That voice, those looks such healing virtues bear,
Thy sweet reviving smiles might cheer despair;
On the pale lips detain the parting breath,
And bid hope blossom in the shades of death."*

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* One of Miss Aikin's most beautiful hymns was written with reference to the marriage of this friend, Miss Rigby. It begins with the verse:

"How blest the sacred tie that binds
In union sweet according minds,
How swift the heavenly course they run
Whose hearts, whose faith, whose hopes are one."

Marriage and School at Palgrave.

Proceeding with Miss Aikin's personal history in connection with her literary history we come to her marriage. That she had many admirers may be inferred from all that her biographers communicate as to her personal appearance, agreeable manners and varied accomplishments. Her niece, Miss Lucy Aikin, states that in early life "she possessed great beauty, distinct traces of which she retained to the latest period. Her person was slender, her complexion exquisitely fair with the bloom of perfect health; her features were regular and elegant, and her dark eyes beamed with the light of wit and fancy."* The few portraits which exist give reality to this description, especially those prefixed respectively to Mrs. Ellis's memoir and the memoir by Mrs. Le Breton. In Miss Meteyard's "Life of Josiah Wedgwood" there is also an interesting engraving of a Wedgwood Cameo Medallion of Mrs. Barbauld in the Mayer Collection. With reference to Miss Aikin's deportment we are informed that she was so unassuming that strangers were never afraid of her, and yet her country training

* The works of Anna Lætitia Barbauld with a memoir by Lucy Aikin. 1825.

caused such a proficiency in gymnastic feats as to excite the surprise of London cousins. "Perhaps it was these" says her niece, "added to the brightness of the lilies and roses which sunk so deep into the heart of Mr. Haynes, a rich farmer of Kibworth,"* that he followed her to Warrington when she was only fifteen, hoping to make her his wife. He first sought her father who answered that his daughter was then walking in the garden and he might go and ask her himself. With what grace the farmer pleaded his cause is not known, "but at length out of all patience at his importunities she ran nimbly up a tree which grew by the garden wall and let herself down into the lane beyond, leaving her suitor *planté la.* The worthy man went home disconsolate and lived and died a bachelor. Though he was never known to purchase any other books, 'The Works of Mrs. Barbauld' splendidly bound adorned his parlour as long as he lived."†

Another admirer of Miss Aikin was Archibald Hamilton Rowan, a student of the Warrington College. It does not appear that he made an offer of marriage, but he says in his autobiography "she was

* Miss Aikin's Life and Works.

† Mrs. Le Breton's Memoir.

my first love." Probably any advances he may have made would have been unfavourably received in consequence of his antecedents. He had been a student at the University of Cambridge and was rusticated as the result of certain under-graduate exuberances—throwing some furniture out of the window and a coachman into the river. Nevertheless he had many fine qualities, and though Miss Aikin may have wisely declined to connect her happiness with a character so unformed and plans in life so uncertain as Mr. Rowan's were at that time, she must have watched his future career with great interest. Settling in Ireland where he had bought an estate, feeling deeply the misrule of the country, he dashed with all the energy of his nature first into the efforts that were made for reformation and then, after the failure of them, into desperate steps for revolution. In 1791 and 1792 he joined the Dublin Volunteers and the Society of United Irishmen. Plausible as the object of these Associations were, and perfectly legitimate at the outset, yet the means of accomplishing them soon became questionable. An information was filed by the Attorney General against Mr. Rowan for distributing libels on the Government, and all the eloquence of Curran, in one of his most celebrated speeches, could not avert conviction. He

was imprisoned but made his escape, first to France, afterwards to America. Ultimately receiving a State pardon he returned to Ireland, finding ample employment in the useful management of his property, and in the conscientious discharge of his various duties as the father of a family, a citizen, a landlord and a friend. He died in 1834 at the age of eighty-four.*

More successful as a suitor of the captivating lady was Rochemont Barbauld, also a student of the Warrington College, son of a clergyman of the Church of England but himself a Nonconformist. His father belonged to a French Protestant family settled in England and had obtained many years previously an appointment as chaplain in the household of the Duchess of Hesse one of the daughters of George the Second. The marriage of the son took place as soon as he obtained the pastorship of a congregation of

* Autobiography of Archibald Hamilton Rowan with Additions and Illustrations by W. H. Drummond, D.D. One of his daughters was Mrs. Fletcher (not the lady mentioned elsewhere in these pages) an elegant and accomplished woman well known in Dublin, and for some time a resident in Bath, from whom I heard some of the above particulars, including that of Mr. Rowan's attachment in early life to Miss Aikin.

English Presbyterians, afterwards Unitarians, at Palgrave, in Suffolk, where he opened a school, which, in consequence of Mrs. Barbauld's high repute, prospered rapidly. Soon after her marriage, and before the plan of a boy's school was decided upon, some of her friends were desirous that a high-class ladies college should be established and that she should be the Principal. Foremost among those friends was Mrs. Montagu, whose letters on the subject have been preserved, and together with Mrs. Barbauld's answers, containing arguments against the scheme, enlighten us as to the existing views on female education.* At once Mrs. Barbauld gave her best energies to the school at Palgrave; she wrote charming lectures on Geography and History; she became the friend of all the boys whom she could in any way interest, and she had a class especially under her own care. Of this class a large proportion became eminent men; Lord Chief Justice Denman was her pupil; so was Sir William Gell, the author of the work on "Pompeii;" so was Dr. Sayers, who wrote a valuable book on "Northern Mythology;" so was William Taylor, whose Historic Survey of German

* Mrs. Ellis's Life, vol. i., p. 57.

Poetry proves him to have been one of the earliest and soundest German scholars in England.* Let me here mention that Mrs. Barbauld being in Scotland in 1795 entertained a party at Dugald Stewart's, by reading William Taylor's then unpublished version of "Bürger's Lenore"

* I well knew the celebrated Palgrave school-house, where Mr. and Mrs. Barbauld lived. It was very near the village church. From its windows might almost have been seen the grave in the church-yard covering the remains of Mrs. Barbauld's mother, marked by a stone shewing that she was the widow of the Rev. Dr. Aikin of Warrington. The house has been long pulled down but "the harsh saw of the carpenter" and "the smiths hammer on the anvil" made so real in a well-known book may still be heard on the village green. The chapel in which Mr. Barbauld ministered disappeared long previously, the congregation having built another in the adjoining town of Diss, within a mile. On the site of the old Chapel they have a Cemetery.

Amongst many valued friends during Mrs. Barbauld's Palgrave life were Mr. Philip Meadows and Mr. and Mrs. Meadows Taylor of Diss. Mr. Philip Meadows was a descendant of the brother of Sir Philip Meadows the Ambassador of Cromwell and the colleague successively of Locke and Milton but esteemed by Mrs. Barbauld for his own sake and as the brother of a lady very dear to her, Mrs. Martineau of Norwich, the grandmother of the Rev. Dr. James Martineau. It was on the death of this Mrs. Martineau she wrote the short poem introduced by Miss Lucy Aikin into her edition of her aunt's works which had been printed separately and inscribed

and that Mr. Scott afterwards Sir Walter, told Miss Lucy Aikin that it made him a Poet. I had always been accustomed to regard this saying of Sir Walter as a good-natured compliment rather than

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"To her honoured friends of the families of Martineau and Taylor by their affectionate friend." Mr. Meadows Taylor was the nephew and successor of Mr. Philip Meadows, acquiring in the legal profession, like his uncle, the esteem and confidence of the whole neighbourhood. I have often heard him speak of the visits to his house of the Palgrave school-boys who became so distinguished in life, especially of "little Tommy Denman" the future Lord Chief Justice. An interesting original letter in my possession from Mrs. Barbauld to Mrs. Meadows Taylor, after her removal to Hampstead, shews how strong were still her sympathies with the Diss and Palgrave circles. Her high opinion of her friend Mr. Philip Meadows appears in some lines on his death which have been lately sent to me in manuscript by a relative. He died at Bath in 1783.

"If genuine merit claim the Muses song,
To thee our tributary strains belong;
Born with a heart that joy'd to soothe distress,
Restrain the oppressor, and the poor to bless,
Prompt to defend the helpless orphans cause,
A steady guardian of the nations laws—
While sage religion, source of bliss below,
With sacred fervour caus'd thy breast to glow,
Pointed to scenes of happiness on high,
And taught thee how to live and how to die."

a matter-of-fact statement, but on turning to the account of what passed in Lockhart's Life of Scott I find ample confirmation of its truth.*

EARLIEST PUBLICATIONS.

Mrs. Barbauld obtained high reputation as an author before her marriage.

Her first publication appeared in 1773; it was entitled "Miscellaneous Poems, chiefly lyrical." To

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* "In the 'Essay on Imitation of Popular Poetry' we learn the interest with which Scott heard a friend's recollection of this performance [Taylor's version]; the anxiety with which he sought after a copy of the original German; the delight with which he at length perused it; and how he called to mind the early facility of versification which had laid so long in abeyance and ventured to promise his friend a rhymed translation of 'Lenore' from his own pen." "Lockhart's Life of Scott," vol. i., p 323.

The friend who was at Dugald Stewart's party was Miss Cranstoun, afterwards Countess of Purgstall, who related the entire story many years afterwards to Captain Basil Hall. Scott began his own translation at once and did not retire to bed until he had finished it. Next morning he carried his manuscript to Miss Cranstoun who was delighted and wrote to a friend in the country, "Upon my word Walter Scott is going to turn out a poet—something of a cross, I think, between Burns and Gray." Other friends expressing their admiration, a few copies of what he had written were printed, and this was not only his first poetry but his first appearance in print.

this she was persuaded by her brother, the second Dr. Aikin, well known for his great literary ability and industry. The success of the book was decisive; the first edition, a handsome quarto, was sold immediately and three other editions in octavo were called for within the year. Of the poems thus eagerly read some were devotional, and from that time to this have been almost part of the religion of many. The longest and most powerful is Corsica. The description of the island and its enchanting scenery, of the inhabitants and their high qualities, of the struggles for freedom they were called upon to renew, are all remarkable in so young a writer. The praise awarded to the first venture led to a second almost immediately. In this she was joined by her brother, the title being "Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose" by J. and L. Aikin. No signatures however being attached to the articles there were some curious mistakes, of which Rogers in his "Table Talk" gives an anecdote. "At a dinner party where I was Charles James Fox met Aikin. 'I am greatly pleased with your Miscellaneous Pieces, Mr. Aikin,' said Fox (alluding to the volume written partly by Aikin and partly by his sister, Mrs. Barbauld.) Aikin bowed. 'I particularly admire,'

continued Fox, 'your essay, Against Inconsistency in our Expectations.' 'That,' replied Aikin 'is my sister's. "I like much' returned Fox 'your essay, on Monastic Institutions.' 'That,' answered Aikin 'is also my sister's,' Mr. Rogers adds, 'Fox thought it best to say no more about the book.' In fact Dr. Aikin's share in the book was the least important and valuable ; the finest and most interesting articles were Miss Aikin's and rather threw his into the shade by their greater brilliancy, depth of thought, and strength of reasoning." Many of the shorter poems in the first publication were written spontaneously as circumstances arose. Some of us remember among the pieces we learnt in childhood "The Mouse's Petition." The author happened to see at Dr. Priestley's house one evening a mouse confined in a cage for some experiment by the great chemist on the nature of the gases in an adjoining brewery. It was too late that evening for anything to be done, and the servant was told to set it by till the next morning. Then it was brought in after breakfast with its petition fastened to the cage. Of course the appeal for liberty was immediately granted. The varied strains of entreaty, argument and benediction were irresistible.

" O hear a pensive prisoner's prayer
For liberty that sighs ;
And never let thine heart be shut
Against the wretch's cries !

For here forlorn and sad I sit
Within the wiry grate ;
And tremble at th' approaching morn
Which brings impending fate."

* * * * * *

" The scattered gleanings of a feast
My frugal meals supply,
But if thine unrelenting heart
That slender boon deny,—

The cheerful light, the vital air
Are blessings widely given ;
Let nature's commoners enjoy
The common gifts of Heaven.

The well-taught philosophic mind
To all compassion gives ;
Casts round the world an equal eye
And feels for all that lives."

* * * * * * *

" So may thy hospitable board
With health and peace be crown'd
And every charm of heartfelt ease
Beneath thy roof be found.

So when destruction lurks unseen,
Which men, like mice, may share,
May some kind angel clear thy path,
And break the hidden snare."

Mrs. Barbauld lived twelve years at Palgrave. It was not probable that she would write many books during that time. Nor did she, but those she did write may be pronounced among the most useful and one of them certainly the most beautiful of her productions. In 1775 she published her "Devotional Pieces," a compilation from the Psalms and the Book of Job, to which is prefixed "Thoughts on the Devotional Taste and on Sects and Establishments." Her next work however, notwithstanding its simple title, was of more practical utility, for it really originated a reformation in the instruction of the young : I mean "Early Lessons for Children." The more immediate object of the book appears to have been the instruction of the author's own little nephew, Charles Aikin, whom she and Mr. Barbauld had adopted, having no children of their own. And the book which I designate the most beautiful was written with the same object: the well-known, never to be forgotten "Hymns in Prose for Children." It has been truly said "they are poetry in everything but the metre."

Where, in the long catalogue of children's books, shall we find any to be compared with them? Many who heard them the first time at their mother's knee can trace to them their deepest, most precious convictions. A century has now passed since they were written; they have been largely used by all classes from the palace to the cottage, and still what a freshness and beauty in every page! In America they appear to be more highly valued than they are in England; they have been translated into French, German, Spanish, and Italian; there is even an elegant translation into Latin Hexameters; the date 1865, the translator Mr. Richard Walker, a graduate of Magdalene College, Oxford. Especially is the world indebted to Mr. Murray for the edition of 1864 in English with its exquisite illustrations, although art even in its highest form has been never needed less to give the full meaning of language.

Mrs. Barbauld states in the Preface that she gave these Hymns in prose because she doubted whether children should not be kept from reading verse till they were able to relish good verse. But intending that her compositions should be committed to memory and recited she says she wrote them in a style which she believed would "be

nearly as agreeable to the ear as a more regular rythmus." Her object was to impress devotional feelings on the infant mind as early as possible, fully convinced as she was "that they could not be impressed too soon, and that a child to feel the full force of the idea of God, ought never to remember when he had no such idea." She therefore sought to connect religion "with a variety of sensible objects, with all that a child sees, all that he hears, all that affects his mind with wonder or delight, and thus by deep, strong, permanent associations to lay the best foundation for practical piety in future life." Thus the child is taken into a garden.

"Come and I will shew you what is beautiful. It is a rose fully blown. See how she sits upon her mossy stem like the queen of all the flowers! Her leaves glow like fire; the air is filled with her sweet odour; she is the delight of every eye." * * * * "She is beautiful, but there is a fairer than she. He that made the rose is more beautiful than the rose: He is all lovely; He is the delight of every heart."

Or he is shewn a more familiar object:

"As the mother moveth about the house with her fingers on her lips and stilleth every little noise that her infant be not disturbed; as she draweth the curtains around its bed and shutteth out the light from its tender eyes; so God

draweth the curtains of darkness around us, so He maketh all things to be hushed and still that His large family may sleep in peace."

By degrees the little one is taught higher truths:

"I have seen the insect being come to its full size languish and refuse to eat; it spun itself a tomb, and was shrouded in the silken cone; it lay without feet or shape or power to move. I looked again, it had burst its tomb; it was full of life and sailed on coloured wings through the soft air; it rejoiced in its new being. Thus shall it be with thee O man! and so shall thy life be renewed. Beauty shall spring up out of ashes and life out of the dust. A little while thou shalt lie in the ground as the seed lieth in the bosom of the earth, but thou shalt be raised again; and if thou art good thou shalt never die any more.'

"Who is He that cometh to burst open the prison doors of the tomb, to bid the dead awake, and to gather His redeemed from the four winds of heaven? * * * * It is Jesus the Son of God, the Saviour of men, the friend of the good. He cometh in the glory of His Father; He hath received power from on high. Mourn not therefore child of mortality, for the spoiler, the cruel spoiler, that laid waste the works of God is subdued; Jesus hath conquered death: child of immortality! mourn no longer."

Continental Journey and Life at Hampstead.

After leaving Palgrave Mr. and Mrs. Barbauld spent some time on the continent. Their work, her own especially, had been so arduous that they needed not only entire cessation but complete change. In letters to friends she describes the countries through which she travelled with the playfulness habitual to her when her mind was at ease. Whatever struck her fancy acquired fresh interest from her mode of relating it, as when in a church at Geneva she saw the clergyman put on his hat as soon as he had given out his text, and many of the congregation followed his example. Sometimes she met eminent people who were also travelling; she mentions especially the pleasure she had derived in February, 1796, from the society of John Howard, then on his second tour of examination of the lazarettos and prison dens of the continent.* There is no trace, however, in any of these letters of an intention soon to resume literary labours, though her brother Dr. Aikin was sufficiently anxious to address to her a poetic epistle on the

* Mrs. Ellis's Life, p. 141.

subject.* But the muse would not return even at the bidding of an affectionate brother; nor though

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* "Fair land! by nature decked and graced by art,
Alike to cheer the eye and glad the heart,
Pour thy soft influence through Lætitia's breast
And lull each swelling wave of care to rest;
Heal with sweet balm the wounds of pain and toil,
Bid anxious, busy years restore their spoil;
The spirit light, the vigorous soul infuse,
And to requite thy gifts, bring back the muse."

Five years afterwards, in 1790, Dr. Aikin, still regretting that his sister did not more frequently give the world works worthy of her reputation for genius and brilliancy of thought wrote the following sonnet:—

"Thus speaks the muse, and bends her brow severe:—
Did I, Lætitia, lend my choicest lays,
And crown thy youthful head with freshest bays,
That all the expectance of thy full-grown year
Should lie inert and fruitless? O revere
Those sacred gifts whose meed is deathless praise,
Whose potent charms the enraptured soul can raise;
Far from the vapours of this earthly sphere!
Seize, seize the lyre; resume the lofty strain!
'Tis time, 'tis time! hark how the nations round
With jocund notes of liberty resound,—
And thy own Corsica has burst her chain
O let the song to Britain's shores resound
Where freedom's once-loved voice is heard, alas! in vain."

she knew the public waited the result of a well-earned holiday. The pen that could labour on other work when duty commanded would only obey a strong impulse in the service of imagination. On the return of Mr. and Mrs. Barbauld to England, Mr. Barbauld accepted an invitation to settle as minister at Hampstead, which enabled his gifted wife to enjoy the literary society of London and to share more fully the general interest in public affairs. This led in 1790 to an address advocating the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts; in 1791 to a Poetical Epistle to Mr. Wilberforce on the Slave Trade; in 1792 to a defence of the expediency and propriety of Public Worship; and in 1793 to a discourse for a Fast Day, entitled "Sins of the Government." All these were subjects of the day; Mrs. Barbauld's spirit responded to what was said and done around her; and, as one of her biographers remarks—"We know not which most to admire, the sagacious and discriminating intellect, the practical good sense and acute observation of life, or the spirited and expressive style which rouses attention, strikes the imagination and carries conviction to the heart."* Subsequently she joined

* Miss Lucy Aikin—Works of Mrs. Barbauld i., lxix. Though belonging to another generation Miss Lucy Aikin may almost be

her brother in what proved to be a very popular work: "Evenings at Home;" she wrote prefaces for new editions of the "Odes of Collins" and "Akenside's Pleasures of Imagination;" she prefixed an essay to a selection of papers from the *Spectator*, *Tatler* and *Guardian;* she gave to the world a "Life of Richardson" in the volumes containing his correspondence; she amused herself by

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ranked with the contemporaries of Mrs. Barbauld. Many of her works were written during the life of her aunt, who refers to them with interest and admiration in many of her letters. She was the first biographer of Mrs. Barbauld, having prefaced a faithful and affectionate memoir to the edition of her works in 1826 here quoted. All Miss Aikin's books were not of equal merit. Her "Life of Addison" disappointed the critic, though it supplied to some extent a want in Literature. The "Edinburgh Review" found great fault with it, remarking, however, that "several of her works and especially the very pleasing 'Memoirs of the Reign of James the First' have fully entitled her to the privileges enjoyed by good writers.' "Edinburgh Review," vol. lxxviii., p. 193. Miss Aikin happened to be in Bath when Mr. Robberds, of Norwich, was preparing for the press the correspondence of Robert Southey and William Taylor. Having known Taylor many years as I also had done, she kindly sent to me in a letter, which appears in the work, her recollections of him "in the freshness and vigour of his powers." Miss Aikin there says she had often heard him name with gratitude Mrs. Barbauld as the "mother of his mind."

superintending an edition of the British Novelist; and finally she published a Poem of great power, though, as was generally thought, too full of despondency, entitled "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven."

We can easily imagine causes for the variety of mental power observable in these works. Some of them appear to have been engaged in as a solace under domestic anxiety which had become more and more depressing. Mr. Barbauld suffered from a mental malady requiring perpetual watchfulness. The trial to his wife had been partially relieved by a removal from Hampstead to Newington, the immediate neighbourhood of Dr. Aikin. But neither medical skill nor brotherly care could avail; the malady increased year by year, and in 1808 Mrs. Barbauld became a widow. The Dirge in which her feelings found vent, beginning with the words "Pure Spirit! Oh, where art thou now!" shows how deeply she felt her bereavement, and with what simple, earnest piety she sought consolation. It has been stated with reference to her last important poem, "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven," that her mind had not regained its usual healthy tone. There is no doubt that she long suffered severely, but the poem should be judged on its own merits, and few persons

would admit that it deserved the bitter criticism with which it was assailed. Its thesis has been described to be this "that Civilisation had always changed her seat from age to age, and that the time was now come at which she would leave Britain, worn out by perpetual war, and take refuge on the shores of the New World."* To understand the feeling on both sides, which was stronger than any that is common even in these days, we must remember that Mrs. Barbauld belonged to the party who admired the American Revolution and deprecated the war with France, while the other party took, on each subject, the precisely opposite side. I do not here attempt to show for a moment which were right; my subject is not the truth or error of Mrs. Barbauld's political opinions but the value of her contributions to English Literature. Still, even with reference to this last point it may be allowable to offer two remarks: First: the Poetess certainly committed an error of judgment in founding on a few military reverses predictions of the permanent decline of the country, especially at the time when the tide of Napoleon's success had already begun to ebb, and

* "Theological Review" No. xlvi., p. 404.

when it was evident that England possessed in Wellington a General of most brilliant promise. Secondly: no error of the kind, however, should have so blinded the critics of the day as to lead them to charge Mrs. Barbauld with a want of patriotism, because some of the most impassioned parts of her poem are those which breathe the most ardent love of her native land. From her time to that of Lord Eldon and from Lord Eldon's to the present day, what prophecy has been more common with partizans on all sides than the ruin of the country if their views were not adopted?

There is a curious circumstance in connection with this poem of "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven." One of the most striking passages is that in which foreign travellers, descended from English ancestors, are described as arriving in this country and visiting scenes deplorably altered. On reading Macaulay's description of the New Zealander in the *Edinburgh Review*, I was so struck with the similarity that I drew attention to it in a periodical publication.* The same idea has since occurred to many others. It was natural that with Macaulay's warm admiration

* "Notes and Queries."

of Mrs. Barbauld the leading ideas of the passage should have lingered in his mind, though at the time he wrote he may have been unconscious of the source of the inspiration.

"Yet then the ingenuous youth whom Fancy fires
With pictured glories of illustrious sires;
With duteous zeal, their pilgrimage shall take
From the Blue Mountains or Ontario's Lake;
With fond adoring steps to press the sod
By statesmen, sages, poets, heroes trod."

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"But who their mingled feelings shall pursue
When London's faded glories rise to view?
The mighty city which by every road
In floods of people poured itself abroad;
Ungirt by walls, irregularly great,
No jealous drawbridge and no closing gate;
Whose merchants (such the state which commerce brings)
Sent forth their mandates to dependent kings;
Streets where the turbann'd Moslem, bearded Jew,
And woolly Afric, met the brown Hindu."

* * * * * *

"Pensive and thoughtful shall the wanderers greet
Each splendid square and still untrodden street;
Or of some crumbling turret, mined by time,
The broken stairs with perilous step shall climb,
Thence stretch their view the wide horizon round,
By scattered hamlets trace its ancient bound,
And, choked no more with fleets, fair Thames survey,
Through reeds and sedge pursue his idle way."*

* Mrs. Barbauld's Works; vol. i., P. 242. Ed: 1825.

Mrs. Barbauld lived fourteen years after the publication of this poem. Her powers were still vigorous; her fancy retained all its brightness, but the harp was hung upon the willows. She felt so deeply the misconstruction of angry critics that she wrote nothing more of much importance, though her kindness and gentleness were more conspicuous than ever. Occasionally she addressed a few beautiful lines to some affectionate friend, or added another exquisite hymn to those in which her deep earnest piety had been expressed from time to time. To dwell upon what she felt and did in this respect would not be desirable; the higher parts of her pure and noble character need not be eulogised on the present occasion. Still, however, is the thought of how she rose above the bitterest trials of our mortal lot a power in many minds; still is the echo of the song of the aged pilgrim going downward to the grave in many hearts:—

"We tread the path our Master trod,
We bear the cross he bore,
And every thorn that wounds our feet,
His temples pierced before.
Our powers are oft dissolved away
In ecstasies of love,

And while our bodies wander here,
Our souls are fix'd above."

It would be easy to show more fully the high estimation in which Mrs. Barbauld was held by competent judges through many years. In addition to the testimony already given of eminent sisters, I might introduce some admirable letters from Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, Joanna Baillie and Mrs. Montagu. But it will be sufficient to mention here one more friendship, that of a lady I have had occasion to mention previously as gifted with talents and graces of no common kind—Mrs. Fletcher, of Edinburgh. This lady is represented by Mr. Ticknor as holding in that city the same position in Whig circles as Mrs. Grant of Laggan held in Conservative society, and her charming autobiography shows that she was deeply and usefully interested in many questions besides those relating to politics. Mrs. Fletcher became acquainted with Mrs. Barbauld in 1801, being greatly struck at once "with the brilliancy and power of her conversational talents."*

* Autobiography p. 80.

* Writing in 1819, Mr. Ticknor says:—"Mrs. Fletcher is the most powerful lady in conversation in Edinburgh, and has a Whig coterie of her own, as Mrs. Grant has a Tory one. She is *the* lady

Ten years afterwards she placed her eldest daughter,

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in Edinburgh by way of eminence, and her conversation is more sought than that of anybody there. I have heard Sir James Mackintosh and Brougham speak of it with enthusiasm and regret that she does not live in London, where they might hear her every day. She is indeed an extraordinary person. She converses with fluency, and with an energy and confidence that would seem masculine, if she did not yield so gently and gracefully, and did not seem to seek always to become a listener; and she has an elegance and finish in the construction of her sentences which is uncommon even in practised speakers, and which I have hardly found in a lady before; and yet it is apparent it is done without effort." . . . . "One of her daughters, Mrs. Taylor, is one of the sweetest, most beautiful, and most interesting creatures I ever beheld. Another Miss Fletcher will, I think, be as remarkable as her mother. This was therefore a delightful house to visit, and during the latter part of the time I was in Edinburgh I went there often." "I went quite as often to Mrs. Grant's, where an American, I imagine, finds himself at home more easily than anywhere else in Edinburgh. She is an old lady of such great good nature and such strong good sense, mingled with a natural talent, plain knowledge, and good taste, derived from English reading alone, that when she chooses to be pleasant she can be so to a high degree. Age and sorrow have fallen pretty heavily upon her. She is about seventy, and has lost several of her children, but still she is interested in what is going forward in the world, tells a great number of amusing stories about the past generation, and gives striking sketches of Highland manners and feelings of which she is herself an interesting representative.—*Life of Ticknor.*

endowed like her mother with uncommon beauty, under the care of her friend for some months in order that

"A new view of society and the great advantage of living with that most excellent and highly gifted woman might excite her to more energetic aspirations after knowledge and all that was praiseworthy." "Previously to my leaving Bessy with Mrs. Barbauld," she says, "I saw a good deal of that remarkable woman—remarkable not more for genius, taste and feeling than for great elevation of mind, lively wit and playfulness of fancy. Her manners were very pleasing without the polish of fashionable life, but with much refinement and perfect good breeding. I wished my dear child to have a high standard of intellectual and moral perfection, and in placing her with Mrs. Barbauld I had my wish accomplished. I think it was Mrs. Barbauld's admirable essay on 'The Education of Circumstances' that gave me so great a desire to place my daughter in the enviable position of her inmate."*

Not always, however, were the accomplished women of the time ready to join in a chorus of praise of the

* That the arrangement was mutually satisfactory may be inferred from the circumstance that Mrs. Fletcher subsequently placed another daughter in the same position—Miss Grace Fletcher, whose early death in 1817 brought a letter from Mrs. Barbauld to the sorrow-stricken mother which she would not fail to appreciate.—*Autobiography, p.* 130.

author of "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven." Among those who preferred adverse criticism was a literary lady of Ipswich, Mrs. Cobbold, a friend and correspondent of Sir James Edward Smith, the President of the Linnæan Society, and author of many valuable scientific works. Mrs. Cobbold had written some beautiful verses on the death of Francesco Borone which were published by Sir James Smith in a volume of his works in 1798. He was thus in a position to remonstrate on her severe strictures on the work of another "highly honoured friend," coloured as they were with personal bitterness. This was done in a powerful letter, afterwards given by Lady Smith in the Life of her husband, which may be referred to here because it shows also how warm were the sympathies in this matter of the venerable woman who has lately died at the great age of a hundred and three. "Now my good friend," says Sir James to Mrs. Cobbold, "forget all party, be a true Christian philosopher; take Mrs. Barbauld to your heart as a congenial spirit; for if you knew her as I do you would love and admire her as much. My wife is copying two productions of hers which abundantly evince her patriotism and piety." One of them was the magnificent hymn, beginning

"Jehovah reigns: let every nation hear,
And at his footstool bow with holy fear,"

in which, through ten noble stanzas, the highest poetic power is sustained while the strongest religious emotions are awakened. Whether the other was the soul-stirring "Address to the Deity" the two first lines of which are

"God of my life, and Author of my days,
Permit my feeble voice to lisp Thy praise,"

is not stated. This is known to have acquired additional interest from the circumstance that it was written immediately after hearing a sermon by Dr. Priestley on Habitual Devotion. The first of these hymns Lady Smith printed in the Life of Sir James with the letter alluded to, remarking "Long as it is since it first appeared in print, the writer makes no apology for inserting it at length in this place." The two opening stanzas declare the unity, majesty and unbounded power of God; the third and fourth picture light penetrating chaos, seasons and months beginning their long procession, the sun, the moon and the stars commencing their eternal course; the fifth and sixth show Earth's blooming face drest with flowers, the circling water poured from the hollow of His hand round the winding shores; and

at length the finished work which caused all the sons of God to shout for joy.

The four concluding stanzas must not be condensed :—

" Yet this fair world, the creature of a day,
Though built by God's right hand must pass away ;
And long oblivion creep o'er mortal things,
The fate of empires and the pride of kings :
Eternal night shall veil their proudest story,
And drop the curtain o'er all human glory.

" The sun himself, with weary clouds opprest,
Shall in his silent dark pavilion rest ;
His golden urn shall broke and useless lie,
Amidst the common ruin of the sky ;
The stars rush headlong in the wild commotion,
And bathe their glittering foreheads in the ocean.

" But fix'd, O God ! for ever stands Thy throne ;
Jehovah reigns a universe alone ;
Th' eternal fire that feeds each vital flame,
Collected or diffused, is still the same.
He dwells within His own unfathomed essence,
And fills all space with His unbounded presence.

" But oh ! our highest notes the theme debase,
And silence is our least injurious praise ;
Cease, cease your songs, the daring flight controul,
Revere Him in the stillness of the soul ;
With silent duty meekly bend before Him,
And deep within your inmost hearts adore Him."

With regard to the estimation in which Mrs. Barbauld has been always held by competent judges it would probably be difficult to adduce the same wealth of testimony from men. Not a few, however, as we learn from Crabb Robinson's Diary, the Life of Sir James Mackintosh, and other sources, agreed with their distinguished sisters in acknowledging what was due to her genius and character. The truth, however, is that the party feeling already mentioned interfered seriously with literary justice; some of the leaders of public opinion obviously allowed their political antipathies to bias their judgment. In proof of this it has been stated on good authority that the first Mr. Murray, of Albemarle Street, regretted nothing more in his connection with the *Quarterly Review* than the article understood to be by Southey on the poem "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven."* But if we really want great names to confirm our own estimate we have the recorded opinions among others of Dr. Johnson, Charles James Fox, Sir Walter Scott, Sir James Mackintosh, Dr. Channing, Lord Brougham, Lord Denman, William Wordsworth, Charles Lamb, Lord Macaulay and Sir Henry Holland, who all

* Crabb Robinson's Diary, vol. i., p. 210.

testify in various ways to Mrs. Barbauld's rank in the world of letters. One instance more from personal recollection and I conclude this part of the subject. It happened some five-and-twenty years ago that I met at a small dinner party in Bath our townsman Walter Savage Landor. All who knew him are aware that he was vehement both in his affections and antipathies, and that in conversation with him allowance was to be made accordingly. Our subject then was very much that of this paper—the Literature of England on its revival at the close of the last century. When I mentioned Mrs. Barbauld I scarcely expected he would share my admiration. It appeared, however, that his own was if possible greater. He spoke of her as the first writer of the day, and became so eloquent in praise of some of her poems that he fixed the attention of the entire party. His good memory enabled him to repeat the passages he most admired. One was from the "Summer Evening's Meditation," and after repeating it, he asked in the manner which those who ever heard him can well remember, "Can you show me anything finer in the English Language?" The lines, alluding to the supposed deep, solemn silence of the stars, are these—

"But are they silent all? or is there not
A tongue in every star that talks with man
And woos him to be wise? nor woos in vain.
This dead of midnight is the noon of thought,
And wisdom mounts her zenith with the stars.
At this still hour the self-collected soul
Turns inward and beholds a stranger there
Of high descent and more than mortal rank,
An embryo God, a spark of fire divine,
Which must burn on for ages, when the sun,
Fair transitory creature of a day,
Has closed his golden eye, and, wrapt in shades,
Forgets his wonted journey through the east."

I must not omit to say a few words on the successors of Mrs. Barbauld and her contemporaries. It was said of Madame D'Arblay that we owe to her not only Evelina, Cecilia and Camilla, but also Miss Austen's Mansfield Park and Miss Edgeworth's Absentee. How much of the writings of the last fifty years we owe to the authors of the preceding fifty it would be difficult to say. Intellectual impulses have acted and reacted largely in both sexes. The women of recent times have surpassed their predecessors certainly in the number and probably in the character of their works. One of the most remarkable in both respects—Miss Harriet Martineau—has lately

passed away. In addition to a very large number of well-filled volumes, stated, I believe, to be more than a hundred, the world has had from the same pen, day by day and week by week, contributions to its newspaper and other periodical literature of wonderful amount and power. Then we have also had foremost in a long list Mrs. Somerville, Miss Herschel, Mrs. Austin, Mrs. Jameson, Mrs. Southey, Mrs. Hemans, Mrs. Norton, Mrs. Kemble, Mrs. S. C. Hall, Mrs. Howitt, Miss Brontë, Mrs. Barrett Browning, Miss Landon, Miss Strickland, Miss Yonge, Miss Ann Taylor and Miss Jane Taylor, with many highly-gifted transatlantic women. Time would fail me to tell how they have adorned their various paths by delicate wit, by sound knowledge, by fine observation, by high moral feeling, by genuine womanly power, all placing them high in the roll of the world's benefactors. Nor can we forget that our own city and the neighbouring city of Bristol have ever been among places known as the abodes of eminent literary women, some combining, most enviably and admirably, high mental power with great practical usefulness, ever seeking out the lost ones of the human family and bringing them back to the fold of the Great Shepherd.

At the recent meeting of the British Association

in Glasgow the Duke of Argyll stated that while science was advancing literature was receding. Undoubtedly there is some truth in this; science has certainly made marvellous progress in recent years and no country can boast of great achievements in literature. But while we may admit that there is now a deficiency of that sympathy with some mental efforts which Max Müller represents as essential to their success, we may yet feel that there is no cause for great anxiety. We may not have in the present day the galaxy of the early part of the century, when Scott, Byron, Shelley, Wilson, Campbell, Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, Thomas Moore, Dickens, Thackeray, Bulwer, Walter Savage Landor, shone together in imaginative literature. We may not have so large a number of historians, philosophers and metaphysicians as when Brougham, Jeffery, Sidney Smith, Mackintosh, Alison, Hallam, Dugald Stewart, Thomas Browne, Arnold, Whately, Grote, Milman, Macaulay, Stuart-Mill, Mahon, walked side by side or followed in quick succession up the steps to the temple of fame. But still we are rich in good authors; the lists of the principal publishers are well filled; periodical literature, daily, weekly, monthly, is on the whole well sustained; and

though a smart, political pamphlet may be a more profitable and saleable production than a brilliant poem, though the age is unquestionably more favourable to material than intellectual development, we have yet ample mental food for all classes. This is the prominent characteristic of modern times, so different from that of the age of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Anne, when, while the upper ten thousand were plentifully fed, the millions below were utterly uncared for,—all the heights of the moral world bathed in sunshine, all the valleys covered with fogs.

That we should earnestly wish the high character of our literature to be maintained is undoubtedly natural. Both on private and public grounds we do well to look anxiously at the announcements of new books. On private grounds, because our personal enjoyment and satisfaction depend to a large extent on the harmony of our reading with our tastes and our wants. On public, because the literature of a country is its moral and intellectual life blood; a people are hence either wise, noble, enlightened, progressive and truly free or the reverse. I am not thinking exclusively of books; I know that in the present day newspapers have enormous influence; and I remember the saying—I think of Fletcher of

Saltoun: "Give me the making of a people's ballads and I care not who makes their laws." But I also remember that that was said very many years ago. Whether our countrymen sing less I have no means of judging, but I am quite sure they read more. And if there has been a great change in the last century, what will it be when the Education Act has been in force a few generations? All this I submit in justification of some thoughtfulness as to the character of the additions to our literature, but again I would say in conclusion: let us not be too anxious. With regard to our own gratification, would it not be wise to avail ourselves more largely of old treasures and to care less for the acquisition of new ones? Is not the enjoyment of reading a good book, a second and even a third time, too often lost sight of? And with regard to the progress of the world at large how little cause have we for fear! What a strong desire is everywhere felt that all educational influences should be of the highest and purest kind! As to genius, the mightiest of all agencies; as to the inspiration that ensures immortality no human eye can foresee its approach, no human skill can calculate its duration; of it how truly may it be said, "Thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth"—it will con-

tinue to shine forth and pass away as in the old times before us, now in smaller, now in larger measure, but of this we may be sure that, like all things subject to Divine control, there will be as much of it as the world really needs, and with this assurance we may earnestly work and patiently wait.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Mrs. Barbauld.

It has been suggested that in the sketch of Mrs. Barbauld as originally given, too little is said of the playful part of her character. The omission was caused entirely by want of time and space. A few of the elegant trifles with which she gratified her friends may be added here. The first was written quite at the close of life. A young lady had asked the aged poetess to write some lines which she might send with a present of a pair of sugar tongs to a bride and bridegroom. The second is a riddle on an egg, not equal perhaps in point to some other riddles from the same pen, but worthy of being transferred after long seclusion in manuscript to the living page. Numbers III., IV. and V. are taken from Miss Lucy Aikin's edition of her aunt's works, in which may be found many longer pieces abounding in wit and humour. Every one who wishes to know how Mrs. Barbauld excelled in this style of composition should read her "Washing Day," "West End Fair" and "What do the Futures speak of?" No. VI. takes the reader from Mrs. Barbauld's own bright thoughts to what was written of herself. It is a dedication to

her by Sir John Bowring, of the second edition of his "Matins and Vespers." No. VII. is a sonnet, believed to be from the pen of one of the Roscoe family, recalling the bright features of mind and character which it is the main object of these pages to embalm. And No. VIII. is an offering from Sir James Edward Smith for the grave of his venerable friend, of which I have been lately reminded, when half a century had passed, by the death of Lady Smith, to whom the lines are equally applicable:—

I.

LINES WITH A WEDDING PRESENT.

The tongs I send acceptance wait,
To greet you in your married state.
Where is the sugar? should you ask;
The sweets to find must be your task.

II.

RIDDLE.

Within a marble dome confin'd,
Whose milk-white walls with silk are lin'd,
A golden apple doth appear
Steep'd in a bath as crystal clear;
No doors, no windows to behold,
Yet thieves break in and steal the gold.

III

Concerning a Marble,

And with reference to the game of Taw beloved by Schoolboys.

The world's something bigger,
But just of this figure,
And speckled with mountains and seas;
Your heroes are overgrown schoolboys
Who scuffle for empires and toys,
And kick the poor ball as they please.
Now Cæsar, now Pompey, gives law;
And Pharsalia's plain,
Though heaped with the slain,
Was only a game at *taw*.

IV.

Verses with a Pair of Screens.

To Dr. A.

Within the cot the muses love,
May peace reside, that household dove!
Beneath this roof, around this hearth,
Mild wisdom mix with social mirth!
May friendship often seek the door
Where science pours her varied store!
Her richest dyes may Flora spread,
And early paint the garden's bed!
May health descend with healing wing,
Bright days and balmy nights to bring!

And tried affection still be bye,
Love's watchful ear and anxious eye;
And sport and laughter hither move,
To bless the cot the muses love!

To Mrs. A.

You whose clear life, one fair, well-ordered day
In useful tenour calmly glides away;
In whom the eye of malice never spied
Aught she could wish to spread, or you to hide,
Whose looks with words accord, and word with deed,
Receive the only *screen* you e'er can need!

V.

To Mr. Barbauld.

Nov. 14, 1778.

Come clear thy studious looks awhile
T'is arrant treason now
To wear that moping brow,
When I, thy empress, bids thee smile.

What though the fading year
One wreath will not afford
To grace the poet's hair,
Or deck the festal board;

A thousand pretty ways we'll find
To mock old Winter's starving reign;
We'll bid the violets spring again,

Bid rich poetic roses blow,
Peeping above his heaps of snow;
We'll dress his withered cheeks in flowers,
And on his smooth bald head
Fantastic garlands bind:
Garlands, which we will get
From the gay blooms of that immortal year,
Above the turning seasons set,
Where young ideas shoot in fancy's sunny bowers.

* * * * * * *

We'll little care what others do,
And where they go and what they say;
Our bliss, all inward and our own,
Would only tarnished be, by being shown.
The talking restless world shall see,
Spite of the world we'll happy be;
But none shall know
How much we're so,
Save only love and we.

VI.

To Mrs. Barbauld.

By Sir John Bowring.

Thou hast heard many voices hymning thee,
Who didst awake their purest, earliest strains;
Flowing like mingling rivulets o'er the plains
They water—till they reach the mighty sea
Where time is blended with eternity.

The current of thy years—which age has crown'd
With hoary honours, and ripe harvests round,
Say, may it drink some gentle dews from me
Of grateful song?—I was in childhood young
And artless, when to my dim vision thou
Wast as a saint,—and from thy gentle tongue
I oft have heard such truths, such thoughts, as wrung
Tears of delight from infancy—and now
Round thee affection hath with reverence clung.

VII.

To the Memory of the Venerated A. L. B.

From the "Monthly Repository," vol. xx. March, 1825.

The graceful humour, exquisitely light,
  Thoughts, young and fresh, that savour'd not of years,
The golden fancy, the poetic flight,
  The vivid sympathy in joy or tears,—
All these were thine; but more than fancy bright,
  Or various powers, in largest measure given,
Was thine unfailing purpose to unite
  And spend them all for virtue and for heaven!
And thus it was that, gentle as the flow
  Of crystal streams, thy stainless thoughts came on;
And the same tongue which pleaded long ago
  With infant hearts, more manly spirits won
To truth and beauty, and the holy power
Of mild religion, in thy closing hour.

VIII.

On the Death of Mrs. Barbauld.

By Sir James Edward Smith.

As o'er the closing urn we bend,
Of each beloved and honoured friend,
What tears of anguish roll!
In vain in death's unconscious face
The living smile we seek to trace
That spoke from soul to soul.

But shall not memory still supply
The kindly glance, the beaming eye,
That oft our converse blest:
That brightened many a prospect drear,
Revived our virtue, soothed our care,
And lull'd each pain to rest?

And when these frail remains are gone,
Our hearts the impression still shall own,
Our mortal path to cheer;
O God! to point the way to Heaven
These angel guides by Thee were given:
How blest to meet them there!

Appendix.

Miss Hannah More.

It may be said of Miss More as of Mrs. Barbauld, no sketch would do justice which omitted the playful side of her character. All who knew her delighted in her cheerfulness, and not a few of her publications are as remarkable for their vivacity and wit as for earnestness and good sense. The daughter of one of her most esteemed correspondents has kindly placed at my disposal some of her letters which have not been published, but are not less characteristic and interesting than many which the world have seen. I have also been favoured by the same friend with other treasures in letters of Miss Martha More, the "sister Patty" so often referred to in the Life and Correspondence of Hannah as a singularly able, high-minded and excellent woman. It will be sufficient to give a few extracts from the letters of both sisters illustrative of circumstances of their time and work, except in one instance, a letter from the elder full of proverbs, which I propose to give *in extenso* because it shews how witty she could be. Previously, however, the reader may not be uninterested in a waif of literary history referring to Mrs. Barbauld as

well as Miss Hannah More, at a period of their lives anterior to the date of the letters which have been sent to me.

In the autobiography of Miss Harriet Martineau lately published, she describes her first attempt at authorship:* it was a paper in the "Monthly Repository" of October, 1822. She does not state the subject of the paper, but relates how anxious she was as to its reception and what pleasure was expressed by her brother when he discovered it was written by her. "My dear," said Dr. Martineau, who was in the medical profession and died early, "My dear, leave it to other women to make shirts and darn stockings, and do you give yourself to this." The paper which occasioned this advice appears to have been the first of two Essays on "Female Writers on Practical Divinity," which were followed by a third on "Female Education," the first Essay being devoted entirely to Miss Hannah More, the second partly to Miss Hannah More and partly to Mrs. Barbauld, and the third to the effect of higher culture on the best interests of women. Although Miss Martineau wrote contemptuously in after life of these

* Autobiography, vol. i.

and other beginnings of a literary career, one of the noblest and most useful of any age, notwithstanding features which her best friends lament, they may surely be still read with much admiration even by advanced thinkers in the present day. Undoubtedly the style and the thoughts are in accordance with her signature "Discipulus;" she writes modestly and deferentially as may well be expected in a first attempt; but her analysis of the religious works of the two great female authors of the day, if somewhat partial in their favour, is extremely sensible; while her vindication of the character of the mind of women and her description of the influence women can and ought to exercise, shew the germs of the eloquence which charmed so many of her readers in future years.*

In an extract from a letter dated Barley Wood, May 29, 1827, mention is made of a gentleman who was probably known to Miss Harriet Martineau.

Miss Hannah More to Mr. J. S. Duncan.†

If you happen to be acquainted with the Rev. Blanco White pray assure him of my cordial regard. His conversion

* Monthly Repository, vols. xvii. and xviii.

† Mr. J. S. Duncan was one of two brothers greatly respected at Oxford and Bath. Their attachment to their University was shown by many liberal deeds, and their general interest in Literature,

was one of the very first importance; his disinterestedness in refusing preferment lest his sincerity should be suspected, is the more honourable because he is destitute of the good things of this world which he has so nobly renounced. When we have been disgusted by the ambition, cupidity and selfishness of the worldly, how refreshing it is to meet with such a character. This puts me in mind of asking if you have seen a pamphlet called "Christian Devotedness" by Mr. Groves, of Exeter. He is a Dentist, by which profession he got two thousand a year. He is deeply interested in the state of Persia,and with the spirit of a martyr resolves to dedicate him-

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Science and Art by their munificent zeal in aiding to found and support the Bath Institution. On the death of the surviving brother, Mr. P. B. Duncan in 1863, a sum of money was contributed for a memorial investment, the interest of which should be appropriated to perpetuate some of the benefits both had conferred on the Institution. The particulars of the investment are inscribed with the following prefix on a brass plate in the vestibule of the building:—

In Memory of Two Brothers,

JOHN SHUTE DUNCAN, D.C.L.,

And

PHILIP BURY DUNCAN, D.C.L.,

Of New College, Oxford, and of the City of Bath,

Who with large minds and liberal hearts

Did good continually,

Winning the gratitude and love of

Their University, their fellow citizens,

And their friends.

self to spend the remainder of his life in that once renowned but now degraded country. He will not however set out on his mission till he has made himself a complete master of the Persian language, without which his labours would be unprofitable. However misanthropic we may be, the contemplation of two such characters restores one to the love of one's species.

Miss Hannah More to J. S. Duncan, Esq.

Barley Wood, May 22, [no year.]

We were beginning to fear you had forgotten us, and were very glad to be assured of the contrary by your obliging letter. I hoped to have thanked you for it more at large, but a sick headache compels me to confine myself to the subject of your kindly proposed visit. We shall be happy to see you either Tuesday or Wednesday in this next week, and hope you will do us the favour of passing a few days with us. I have no attraction to hold out to you but the lilacs in full bloom. In one day we cannot discuss half the subjects you talk of. Let me have a line fixing your day, as we have another friend waiting a summons.

I have been confined nearly six months, but am now at large. I admire your patience in reading Calvin, you will wonder at my want of curiosity in never having read a page of him. I dislike all controversy, and do not know that I hold one doctrine peculiar to Calvinism. Some of those you enumerate I believe are held by all orthodox Christians of whatever denomination, certainly by Arminians as well as

Calvinists—but I hate the harrowing terms. I belong to no party—to be a Bible Christian is my wish and aim. I hope your health is better. You may depend on a well aired bed.

How is our amiable friend Mrs. Fordyce?

Miss Hannah More to J. S. Duncan, Esq.

Feb. 10th [no year.]

I sometimes say there are 98 reasons for living in the country and but two for living in a town. I will spare you the 96, but the two are—the churches are damp, and if you want to see a book you must buy it, for you can neither hire nor borrow. My enchanting friend, Lady Olivia Sparrow (whose Christian and lovely character would fill pages) interpreting my wishes has sent me the costly quartos of Dr. Clarke and Walter Scott. With the Travels I have been on the whole much amused, though I regret that he has not only belaboured and vilified the Russians when they come fairly before him, but seems to have incessantly gone out of his way to abuse them. I hope the Russian Ambassador here does not understand English. There is no history in the book, which is more than can be said of most modern Travels, and there are solemn passages. As for "Rokeby" it is dearer than bread! Two guineas for four hours' light reading is really a heavy demand on every purse over whom my friend Vansittart's budget hangs. Scott cannot but be a great poet, the hand of the master appears in numerous felicities of expression. The imagery as usual is beautiful,

but we have had the moon in all her phases so frequently, and the tramp of steeds, and the dark bronzed Russian, and the dell and dingle so repeatedly, that we now require something that has more of the gloss of novelty, something that shall excite a stronger interest than the interlocutors of "Rokeby" excite, at least in my mind. The story does not appear to me to be very intelligible nor very interesting. The 5th Canto is spent in singing songs—very pretty songs I allow—but it causes the interest to be retarded and pushes forward all the business to the 6th, in which there is not room to dispatch it.

Miss Martha More to Mrs. Parker, 1816.

I cannot express my surprise that you had not before heard of the cheap Repository. The intention of my sister's plan was to resist Tom Paine—and greatly was she blessed in the attempt. Fifteen Bishops, Mr. Pitt, and Lord Kenyon patronised the work. Two millions were sold the first year. Committees were formed all over England for their dispersion, particularly in London. Our navy and army were well supplied, they were regularly read at their messes. For three years she found three a month till she was almost worn out, and so were we all. Sally wrote several and very good ones. The year before this time when the country was in the greatest danger, people high in power requested she would set about immediately, and try her skill at a little pamphlet to answer some of the new jacobinical doctrines. In a few days she produced "Village Politics," which of course you

have seen. I believe this was thought to have succeeded better than any little work of the day, and Government had them distributed by hundreds of thousands. Those little works continue to sell greatly, and I believe to do good. An obscure female being thus called out to serve her fellow creatures, no wonder the ordinary cry of Methodist, &c., &c., was showered down upon her by the malignant and the envious; but come and see her my friend, and you will behold the humblest, meekest person you have ever seen, and if I mistake not your character you will think so. Pray recollect, I do not force this account upon you, it is in answer to an enquiry of yours, or it never would have occurred to me to have sent it.

Miss Hannah More to J. S. Duncan, Esquire.

Barley Wood, July 1st [no year.]

I cordially congratulate you, or rather your good sister, on your safe return to your native land, quite as much an Englishman I am persuaded as when you quitted it. You were very generous not to be so much absorbed by all the interesting scenery and intellectual delights which surrounded you on the right hand and on the left, as not to forget that you had friends at home to whom a communication of your enjoyments would be most acceptable; for this *un*selfishness I send you my best thanks. I partook of the pleasures which the sight of the Imperial City afforded you and of all the classic images which such a scene is calculated to awaken, in that proportion which the reading of a thing bears to the

seeing it. I conceive that such a cluster of wonders, such a combination of every thing that *was* great must have filled the mind with a confused mixture of rapture and regret. Perhaps you were inclined to cry out in the words of an inscription on an accomplished friend, "the *remembrance* of thee is sweeter than the *society* of others." To a mind thoroughly imbued with ancient lore there must be a melancholy pleasure in thinking what Rome *was* and what she *is*! Goldsmith in describing her says

"*Man* is the only growth that dwindles here."

I had several letters from my friend Herford. Nothing pleased me more in his or yours, than the exertions made for the sufferers of both countries. Did the haughty Roman ever imagine when he invaded this dark, ignorant, almost unknown island, that some of her generous inhabitants would have met together to give bread to her famished descendants? They *would* have given them too the bread of life, but that it pleased Pope Pius to reject it as pernicious food.

A propos of the Bible we have just had a visit from Mr. Paterson from Petersburgh who gives a glorious account of its progress throughout the unwieldly territories of Alexander the *good*. It is delightful to hear of his zeal in this great cause. We have also had the Northern star, Dr. Chalmers, at Barley Wood. He is a man of great simplicity of manners, the very antipodes of the splendour of his sermons in which certainly, with all their eloquence, there is too much ambition of ornament. Mr. Canning shed tears at hearing him preach,

notwithstanding his broad Scotch. Not the least interesting among our guests was Mr. Davison of Oriel whom you doubtless know.

The death of my sister Sarah has been a heavy blow to us. We miss hourly that vivacity, spirit and gaiety which age had not tamed, and which was the life of our little circle. But this loss is mitigated by consolations the most cheering. I never witnessed so edifying dying bed. Her sufferings were long and exquisite, and were protracted, I doubt not, that "patience might have its perfect work." It was a piety sustained without any intermission during many agonising weeks.

After the thoughts which such a recollection excites, it may savour of vanity to tell you that I have received from France an elegant Translation of Cœlebs, and from Germany another Translation in the language of that country. I am too ignorant to know whether this is well done. They have also sent me from Paris several Reviews of this humble work, written in a spirit of soberness which I should not have expected from that quarter. I do not however expect it *can* be well received in that Capital. In Germany I have better hopes.

Miss Hannah More to Miss Mary Froud.

My dear Mary, [No date.]

I beg thro' you to offer my best thanks to Mr. Russ, and your obliging Mamma for their great kindness to me. I left all with great regret, fearing the accomplishment of that

wise adage "Out of sight, out of mind," and that "Long absent is soon forgotten." I rode slowly on, remembering that "Fair and softly goes far," and that "He must needs go whom the Devil drives." The latter part of the road was tiresome, but "'Tis a long lane that has no turning," and the variety amused me, for "Every one to his liking, as the woman said when she kissed her cow;" now her husband's name was Cow, and you know 'tis the hypothesis of a wise youth that they lived at Cowes in the Isle of Wight, but the geography of the jest is merely conjectural. I hope you have mended the saddle bags, for "A stitch in time saves nine," and "Wealth makes waste, and waste makes beggars;" you may however reap this benefit from having torn them, that "Wit bought is better than wit taught." Mr. and Mrs. Brickenden were at Stoke, forgetting, like me, at that time, the maxim which says "Keep your home and your home will keep you;" Miss Brickenden was very obliging to me; she is a fine girl, but "Handsome is that handsome does;" she got me a good supper, tho' I found that "Hunger is the best sauce." I expected when I got home to have been called names, for staying so long; so I frankly began with telling them "I did not care what they called me, so they did not call me late to dinner." I rose with the lark and set with the same, being determined to "Take time by the forelock," and "Early to bed and early to rise."

I beg to know how the match of the fair *Alembrick* on the hill goes on. "Happy is the wooing that's not long a doing;" though on the other hand I remember an observation of

equal solidity, which is, "Marry in haste and repent at leisure;" this, however, I am certain of marriages in general, that "Money makes the mare to go," and that "There is never so bad a Jack but there is as bad a Gill:" 'tis true this lady is a beauty, but "Joan is as good as my lady in the dark;" tho' if she is not clever "You cannot make a silk purse of a sow's ear;" but then she may be discreet, and it is well known that "an ounce of discretion is worth a pound of wit." "He that goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing," said I to myself, when I found it would be two miles out of the way to leave the umbrella I had borrowed. I relinquished this thought however, for fear of tiring Susan, for I don't think it right to "Ride a free horse to death;" beside, said I, I can send it home to-morrow, for tho' "To-morrow is a long day," yet "'Tis better late than never."

Patty was greatly diverted by our Wilton visit, but I say "Let those laugh that win," and "There's no knowing the luck of a lousy calf;" I told her you liked Mr. Mease best, but she will have it that you "Take Robert for Richard;" she is afraid Sally will be an old maid, but I tell her "Promises and pie crusts are made to be broken." "Marriage is a lottery," and "Every one can't draw a prize:" and as to riches they are "Here to-day and gone to-morrow," and "What is got over the Devil's back is spent under his belly." I beg my compliments to Mrs. Kelly: perhaps she will say my love's sufficient; tell her she has promised if she comes to Bristol to come and see me; but "Saying and doing are two things." I wish I were as notable as she; for a "Fortune

in a wife is better than a fortune with a wife," and "the Devil tempts other men, but an idle man tempts the devil;" tell Miss Nancy I hope she will be as industrious, for "What's bred in the bone is never out of the flesh." I believe Samuel left Knoyle with as much reluctance as I, for "Like master like man." Remember me to the young Priest and tell him we expect him and his sisters at Christmas; for my part "I shan't expect you till I see you;" "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," and "One hold fast is better than two I'll give thee's." I expect an answer to this, for I think you ought to give me "A Rowland for my Oliver," and "One good turn deserves another." I tell Patty what a pleasant jaunt I had, but she says "My geese are all swans." She says "Between your brother and me there's never a barrel the better herring," and "Birds of a feather flock together." I smartly answered, "The mother wou'd not have looked in the oven for her daughter, if she had not been there herself," and for my part I thought "Harm watch harm catch." I hope Mr. Frowd went thro' his ordination cleverly, and "The nearer the Church won't be the farther from God." I know he has "wit at will," and I hope not "More wit than grace." I conclude with my best wishes —you know what would be the consequence if "Wishes were horses;" why the consequence wou'd be I wou'd ride back to Knoyle and assure you all how much I am your faithful friend,

H. More.

ADDITIONAL SKETCHES.

Mrs. Trimmer.

I now proceed to give sketches which I was unable to introduce in my paper at the Institution, of a few more contemporaries of Mrs. Barbauld.

Mrs. Trimmer was the daughter of Joshua Kirby, an artist, originally of Ipswich. She was born in 1741, married in 1762, and died in 1810. When she was fourteen her father removed to London to become perspective teacher to the Prince of Wales. There his profession led to friendship with Hogarth, Gainsborough, and Sir Joshua Reynolds; also with Dr. Johnson, whom they met at Sir Joshua's house.

The school in which Sarah Kirby was placed at Ipswich must have been a good one. At home she was remarkable among other things for her excellence in reading aloud—a most valuable talent. She knew Milton's Paradise Lost thoroughly, which led Dr. Johnson to give her a copy of his Rambler. At twenty-one she was married to Mr. Trimmer, of Brentford, who seems to have been in good circumstances as the owner and manager of considerable brick-fields. They had twelve children, six sons and

six daughters, for whom her interest in education was awakened, and through whom many of her teaching plans were carried out, the elder ones being employed to teach the younger, and all to do more or less in the same way with the poor of the neighbourhood.

Time would not allow a memoir of Mrs. Trimmer in my original paper; nor, perhaps, should I have given it even if I could have detained my audience longer. The contemporaries of whom I had to speak were "the more *distinguished* of the women who first followed Mrs. Barbauld as authors" That Mrs. Trimmer was a remarkably good and useful woman there can be no doubt, but it would also now be generally admitted that she was narrow and one-sided. Miss Yonge in adverting to these failings says, "no woman can really escape narrowness," and "the most determined repudiations thereof result in the most cruel intolerance of all." I am sorry to differ from so admirable a writer, but surely these pages testify that women can be as large-minded as men. We may agree with Miss Yonge that Mrs. Trimmer was contracted, and yet why should due praise be withheld from her unquestioned merits?

What were they? She served the young and the poor largely. She saw a great want of good children's

literature, and she did what she could to supply it. She was surrounded by a population at Brentford, poor, ignorant, vicious, and she devoted herself to the work of improving it. Whether we think of the efforts she made to teach kindness to dumb animals, or to bring the waifs and strays of the lanes and streets under religious influences, we hold her name in grateful remembrance. Who would not wish the most popular of her books, "Fabulous Histories," to continue a nursery classic: Robin, Dicksy, Flapsy and Pecksy still exciting wonder and delight at the first dawn of reason; the little birds while teaching and training one another teaching and training little brothers and sisters? Or who would forget one of the earliest attempts at Sunday Schools:—Mrs. Trimmer and the Vicar of Ealing going round among the poor, taking down the names of the children whose parents were willing to send them, finding, that though five hundred would come, no teachers out of the Trimmer family could be found to instruct them, and yet ere long hiring five rooms, placing a paid teacher in each, and enlisting ladies and gentlemen to superintend.

Still, as to Mrs. Trimmer's rank in literature, it is impossible to concede a high one. Motives and

objects may be duly appreciated without any admission of rare genius or enduring power. Miss Yonge puts the matter thus: "The Aikin family were the first to begin upon the material and moral line of childish literature, but the more anxiously religious mothers felt a certain distrust of the absence of direct lessons in Christian doctrines; and Mrs. Trimmer was incited to begin a course of writing for young people that might give the one thing in which, with all their far superior brilliancy, the Aikins were felt to be deficient." The very next sentence, however, is this, "Her 'Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature' was her first essay in this style, and we must own that our first sensation on hearing that it was once very popular is to think what a famished state children must have been in when they enjoyed it." The truth is that the writings of Mrs. Trimmer which have lived longest and proved most useful are those which, like the writings of the Aikins, are free from dogma and find an answering chord in the hearts and minds of children. Whether any of the good Brentford lady's works equalled in real practical and permanent religious power Mrs. Barbauld's Hymns in Prose may be a fair question, while as to true poetic inspiration no

one would doubt for a moment. In what way Mrs. Trimmer has been and is likely to be most enduringly useful is shown in the following passage by Miss Yonge:—

"Madame de Genlis' 'Adele et Theodore' strongly interested Mrs. Trimmer; and one of the first hints she took was from the furniture of the famous educational chateau, with the historical hangings—Roman Emperors in the dining-room, and French Kings in the schoolroom, Scripture History in the hall, and Greek heroes in the saloon. All her life Mrs. Trimmer had been connected with artists, and she was thus enabled to put forth a series of small prints of sacred and profane history, either to be hung in nurseries, or looked over in small square books. Looking at the art that was then, and for long after, thought good enough for children, these are wonderfully good; they are engravings, and are designed in a truly reverent spirit in dealing with sacred subjects. Real power or genius there is none; it was sheer instruction and not æsthetics that was aimed at, and there was not even any attempt at obtaining ideas from the works of old masters; the aim was to produce a set of instructive pictures, and that aim has been completely fulfilled. Those who are old enough to have begun life with inherited copies of Mrs. Trimmer's firm, little, square red calf volumes, must own to always seeing Moses' ark of bulrushes, and Solomon's lion throne, Hannibal's vow of hostility, and the Thracian wives bewailing the coming

troubles of their new-born children, much as she depicted them, and to have thence carried away many a firmly-fixed idea, even though they seldom touched the accompanying volume of 'reading,' which was always in a most tell-tale state of preservation, compared with its more attractive companions."*

Mrs. Trimmer's life, apart from her literary and charitable labours, was uneventful. The marriages of her children and the births of her grandchildren alternated with the publication of her books and the establishment of her schools. Several of her sons became clergymen, naturally obtaining the patronage of Bishop Porteus and other dispensers of preferment, who appreciated what the mother had done. Death came to this good woman in her seventieth year, with only an hour's previous indisposition. As she was sitting in her chair in her study, she bowed her head and passed away so peacefully that for some time her children believed her to be asleep.

MRS. PIOZZI.

Another correspondent of Mr. J. S. Duncan was Mrs. Piozzi, who, with little pretensions of her own to literary talent, delighted in the society of literary

* Good Women, p. 280.

people. Three years older than Mrs. Barbauld, and living till 1821, she knew many of the authors of the time and liked to talk of them in her large circle of friends. She often came to Bath, where, even in old age, she met many who were glad to listen to her never failing anecdotes of celebrated people, told very much in the style of her letters.

Mrs. Piozzi to J. S. Duncan, Esq.

Penzance; 7 March, 1821.

Ah Dear Mr. Duncan, but it *is* too late: That charming Young Man comes to enliven this Place just as I am leaving it, how vexatious! but if the mild Air of this South West Latitude, which relaxes me to a Rag, agrees with him and his Sick Sister, all will be well, and I shall consider a good Account of their Health as a compensation for their Company. *I* must, at 81 or 82 Years old, *try* to get nearer *the Clouds*. My Breath suffers sadly in this damp air, I will try Clifton—not in the Glare of gay Society, yet removed from this State of almost entire Solitude—how Mr. Colquhoun will find it remains to be seen: he will like Dr. Forbes, *in* and *out* of his medical Capacity. Our Gooseberry Bushes here are all out, and the Myrtles blooming. Honeysuckle Leaves in every Hedge, and the Fields Green as an Emerald, —when we can see them for Fog. The Lizard Lights (visible on *clear* Evenings) look very well, and seem more distant than they are. Yet I am going to meet Snow on the Gloucestershire Hills. What Wonder! in the last Stage of Life's

Fever. Restlessness is a regular symptom; and I left Bath in June. When you see Dear Sir George Gibbes, give him my best and most affectionate Compliments. Things must go ill indeed when I forget how kind and partial he and you have always been to, Sir,

Your very much Obliged and faithful Servant,

H. L. Piozzi.

Mrs. Piozzi did try Clifton but without success. It was "too late" for any permanent results either of balmy or bracing air. She died soon after her removal. There was a time when she was accustomed to say, half in jest and half in earnest, that it was our own fault if we got old. In her autobiography she illustrates this theory by a story of a Cornish gentlewoman living near Penzance, who held a lease under the Duke of Bolton, granted for ninety-nine years from the time of her birth. "She not only lived to give up the lease but rode ten miles to discharge the duty; she was naturally asked to take a glass of wine which she accepted; she was offered a second but declined as she had to ride home upon a young colt and was afraid to make herself giddy headed."

Of considerable repute in various ways was Mrs. Piozzi. But it was under her former name of Mrs.

Thrale that she was best known. Her first husband, a wealthy brewer, entertained before his marriage very good society which she afterwards greatly improved. Well born, clever, agreeable, with undoubted personal attractions, she drew around her a circle to which it was thought a privilege to belong. Dr. Johnson was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Thrale by his friend Arthur Murphy, who had prevented any shock from the ungainly appearance and manners of the great author by a frank announcement of particulars. "His figure large and ill-formed," soon appeared weekly at the hospitable table; by degrees his visits were more and more frequent, till he became a permanent inmate. He lived twenty years with his friends at Streatham, the kind mistress of the house tending him with affectionate care and afterwards restoring him "to better health and greater tidiness."

Dr. Johnson, in return, had a very sincere regard for Mrs. Thrale. But he scolded as well as petted; gave lectures or wrote complimentary odes, according to his varying moods. Undoubtedly to people so generous as Mr. and Mrs. Thrale it was a great pleasure to have in their house a literary lion, always an object of interest if not of edification

to the fashionable world. At one time it must have been no small favour to be a guest in that house. Not only was the author of "Rasselas" there and always to be relied upon for things worth hearing. There also was "little Fanny Burney," her note book being at hand ready for the jottings which should amuse the next generation. There Garrick, ever thinking much of himself while listening condescendingly to Goldsmith's "palaver," as he called it, or to the hostess telling him that he sat upon her knee as a child. There Boswell, lively and observing, if not dignified, with Burke, and Sir Joshua, and Langton and Beauclerk—lords, ladies, politicians, ecclesiastics, all not sorry to be brought together at Streatham.

But those Streatham days were to have an end. The kind-hearted brewer died, and the uncouth lexicographer had to leave. At length, however, came a rupture; the widow chose to marry the music-master of her daughters, and her "guide, philosopher and friend" wrote a letter which by many will be called savage. "Madame . . . . If you have abandoned your children and your religion, God forgive your wickedness, if you have forfeited your fame and your country, may your folly

do no further mischief."* The reply was admirable. "Sir. . . . . The birth of my second husband is not meaner than that of my first; his sentiments are not less worthy, and his superiority in his profession is acknowledged by all mankind. It is want of fortune then that is ignominious. The religion to which he has always been a zealous adherent will, I hope, teach him to forgive insults he has not deserved; mine will, I hope, enable me to bear them at once with dignity and patience."

On receiving this letter Johnson relented and wrote amiably. The lady forgave him and sent an affectionate farewell. There is no doubt as to which was in the wrong, though "society," which admired wealth in a brewer, could see no merit in an Italian gentleman. It was not for Johnson, who had been set up as a sage, to endorse the silly disapprobation

* What a striking contrast to his translation from a little Italian poem in friendly flattery of Mrs. Thrale:—

"Long may live my lovely Hetty,
Always young and always pretty.
Always pretty, always young,
Live my lovely Hetty long.
Always young and always pretty,
Long may live my lovely Hetty."

of such a tribunal, and insult a woman who for many years had literally nursed him as a daughter would nurse a father. Mrs. Piozzi went to Italy with her new husband. Dr. Johnson died in the year of her marriage.* She survived her husband also and died in 1821.

Miss Harriet Lee and Miss Sophia Lee.

These ladies were jointly the authors of the Canterbury Tales, a work much read in Mrs. Barbauld's time, Harriet being the chief contributor. They were daughters of John Lee, an actor at Covent Garden Theatre. Soon after his death they opened a school at Belvedere House, Bath, which they carried on many years. The school had considerable repute, both in their own time and while it was conducted, after their removal, by Mrs. Broadhurst, whose husband, the Rev. Thomas Broadhurst, was well known in literary and musical circles in Bath. Sophia first appeared as an author in 1780, when she gave to the world "The Chapter of Accidents," a comedy which soon became popular. It was followed by "The Recess: a Tale of Other Times," remarkable

* Hayward's Autobiography of Mrs. Piozzi. "Chambers's Book of Days."

as the first historical romance in the English language. The subject is Queen Elizabeth and Mary, Queen of Scots. A sentence in the preface is a fair specimen of the literary style of the period. "To the hearts of both sexes nature has enriched with sensibility, and experience with refinement, this tale is humbly offered; in the persuasion such will find it worthy their patronage." That the tale was popular may be inferred from the circumstance that the edition from which this is taken is the fifth; the date is 1804. Mrs. Radcliffe, another celebrated novelist, who also resided at Bath and knew the Miss Lees intimately, was a great admirer of "The Recess." Though very young at the time it was published her mind probably thus received a stimulus which led to "The Romance of the Forest" and "The Mysteries of Udolpho." Sophia Lee was likewise the author of "The Life of a Lover," and other minor works. She died at Clifton in 1824. Harriet died there in 1851, aged 94.

Of Harriet a little more may be said in connection with a remarkable offer of marriage from a no less celebrated man than William Godwin, after the death of his first wife, Mary Wollstonecraft. The particulars have been lately made known by Mr.

C. Kegan Paul, in a valuable addition to biographical literature, "William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries." In a chapter entitled "A Singular Courtship," we learn how Godwin visited Bath in 1798, met the authors of the "Canterbury Tales," specially admired the younger sister Harriet, and "immediately resolved to study her mind with a view to marriage. Though he only visited her four times, he returned to his lodgings on each occasion to make elaborate analyses of her share of the conversation in which they had discussed various books—Rousseau's, Richardson's and others, soon making up his mind to win her if possible for his wife. There are few more interesting chapters in modern biographies than this which Mr. Paul has introduced. The love letters are, as he says, unique, manifesting in a high degree the argumentative power for which the philosopher was remarkable combined with a manly tenderness that he might not have been supposed to possess. "Miss Lee herself," we are told, "was not disinclined to marriage, but feared what would be thought of it by her sister and the world." Almost persuaded to treat this objection as lightly as in reality it deserved to be treated, there remained what was to her a grave question: Were

Godwin's own opinions such as would promise a happy marriage with a woman who held strongly her faith in God and the divine guidance of the world?"* Throughout she certainly gave little if any encouragement, and the more earnestly the suitor defended his theological position, the more resolute the lady became in her determination to say No.

Two extracts will show how these authors, who gave to the world such thrilling love stories at the close of the last and the beginning of the present centuries, closed their own correspondence.

William Godwin to Miss Harriet Lee, London, June, 1798.

"But I have done. I entertain no hopes of a good effect from what I now write, and merely give vent to the sentiments your determination was calculated to excite. I have made no progress with you. When you have dropped an objection it has been only afterwards to revive it; when I have begun to entertain fairer prospects, you have convinced me I was deluding myself. My personal qualities, good or bad, are of no account in your eyes, you are concerned only with the articles of my creed. I am compelled to regard the affair as concluded, and the rational prospect of happiness to you and myself as something you conceive better than happiness. I have now discharged my sentiments, and here ends my censure of your mistake. If ever

* "Life of Godwin," Vol. I., p. 302.

you be prevailed on to listen to the addresses of any other man, may his success be decided on more equitable principles than mine have been."

Miss Harriet Lee to Mr. William Godwin, Bath, July, 1798.

"You distress me, sir, extremely, by agitating a question which ought to be considered as decided. I had full opportunity, when in Town, to hear, and attentively to weigh your opinions concerning the point on which we most differ: for perhaps I do not fully agree with you in supposing our minds at unison on many others; but that is immaterial—the matter before us is decisive. All the powers of my understanding, and the better feelings of my heart concurred in the resolution I declared before we parted; every subsequent reflection has but confirmed it. With me our difference of opinion is not a mere theoretical question. I ever did, never can feel it as such, and it is only astonishing that you should do so. It announces to me a certain difference in—I had almost said a *want* in—the heart, of a thousand times more consequence than all the various shades of intellect or opinion. My resolution then remains exactly and firmly what it was: it gives me great pain to have disturbed the quiet of your mind, but I cannot remedy the evil without losing the rectitude of my own."

MRS. RADCLIFFE.

For many years this lady was undoubtedly more celebrated than some of those who, as contemporaries

of Mrs. Barbauld, were described in my origina paper. To me, however, her real position in the world of letters does not appear so high as theirs, inasmuch as with great literary skill and dramatic power, she lowered rather than elevated the public taste. So wild were her fictions generally, so full of horrors the most popular, that they had a strong tendency to indispose the majority of readers for any works treating of the ordinary events and duties of life. Still the author was a woman of rare intellectual power; she struck out a path in English literature almost entirely new; and she won the admiration not merely of all who loved sensational writing, but of many who could appreciate true genius.

Mrs. Ann Radcliffe was born in 1764. Her father, Mr. William Ward, was in trade in London. On both sides she had opulent and cultivated relations by whose society she benefited. It has been stated in the sketch of the Miss Lees that part of her early life was spent in Bath, and that she was a friend of those ladies. Other literary people lived there, doing much to improve the tone of the society, and keeping alive the lamp which, amidst many deadening influences, had often burnt brightly in the City of the Springs. The good and kind

Allen of Prior Park had passed away, and with him the circle of eminent literary men of whom he was the beneficent centre, the representatives of the wit and the wisdom, the poetry and the philosophy of the age. After him came Lady Miller, at Batheaston, the wife of Sir John Miller, who, though living in a less fortunate period of English Literature and the head of a local school which happily soon ceased to exist, at all events led many people to live for something better than the prevailing dissipation. Miss Ward must have been welcome in any society. At the age of twenty she had a beautiful face, a figure well proportioned, and most agreeable manners. She was fond of music; she was also a student of the Greek and Latin Classics; but her chief delight was in Nature, the glories and beauties of the outward world, which she sought in long solitary walks. At twenty-three she married Mr. William Radcliffe, on whose tastes, whether congenial with her own or not, her biographers are silent; all that we know is that he was first a graduate of the University of Oxford, then a student of law, and afterwards proprietor and editor of the *English Chronicle*.

Within two years of her marriage Mrs. Radcliffe

published her first novel: "The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne." Though the scene is laid in Scotland during the dark ages, there is no attempt to connect the manners or scenery of the country with the story, so that altogether it was not an auspicious beginning. Her next work, however, "The Sicilian Romance," published in 1790, attracted great attention; it displayed the exuberant fertility of imagination which formed the leading characteristic of her mind; adventures following adventures in rapid and brilliant succession, with all the charms of hair-breadth escape and capture, prove as entrancing as an oriental tale. Mrs. Radcliffe wrote so rapidly that in the following year, 1791, she was able to bring out "The Romance of the Forest." This at once raised her to that pre-eminence in her own style of composition which her works have ever since maintained. Her fancy had become more regulated; the sound rules of a connected tale were better observed, and the characters were depicted with far superior skill. "The public," says Sir Walter Scott, "were chiefly aroused or rather fascinated by the wonderful conduct of a story, in which the author so successfully called out the feelings of mystery and awe, while chapter after chapter and incident after

incident maintained the thrilling attraction of awakened curiosity and suspended interest. Of these every reader felt the force, from the sage in his study to the family group in middle life assembling round the evening fire."

In 1795 Mrs. Radcliffe visited the scenery of the Rhine. It was after this journey that "The Mysteries of Udolpho" were corrected, if not originally written. The announcement that she had thus employed her time raised high expectations, and the booksellers offered for the work what was then an unprecedented price—five hundred pounds. Nor was there any disappointment; on the contrary the author's popularity increased; it was found that the moulder-ing castles of the robber-chivalry of Germany had given a bolder flight to her imagination and a more glowing character to her colouring. "The Wizard of the North" recognised still more clearly a sister spirit in the Enchantress, "who, again waving her wand over the world of wonder had employed a spell of higher power," while "the Public, fascinated by the mere title, rushed eagerly upon the book and did homage to the author by a large demand for it." Stimulated by all this praise Mrs. Radcliffe wrote one more work, "The Italian,"

which appeared in 1797. For this the booksellers rose to eight hundred pounds, and again both they and the public were satisfied. Sir Walter Scott praises the author for her judgment, "in taking such a point of distance and distinction that while employing her own peculiar talent and painting in a style of which she may be considered the inventor, she cannot be charged with repeating or copying herself." But another writer remarks, "The mere change of subject, of taking a point of distance and distinction, as remote as possible from the scenes in which her imagination had previously expatiated, does not necessarily imply originality of invention in the construction and development of her story. On the contrary she selected a species of machinery afforded her by the most vulgar conceptions entertained of the Catholic religion, when established in its paramount superiority; and instead of contemplating it calmly as reflected in the glass of history, she adopted all the conventional and ready-made horrors that came in her way, and had thus at her disposal the usual apparatus of monks, spies, dungeons, the mute obedience of the familiars of the Inquisition, and the dark, domineering spirit of the emissaries of Rome." "The Italian," however, was

well received by the public at that time as subsequently too ready to favour religious antipathies, and then like an actress in full possession of applauded powers, she chose to retire from the stage in the very blaze of her fame, and for more than twenty years an imagination naturally so prolific remained unfruitful."*

Among the rumours as to the cause of her seclusion one was extremely painful. The world believed that by brooding over imaginary terrors she had lost her reason and become the inmate of a lunatic asylum. For this there was no foundation; she retained all her faculties, and simply chose that they should be henceforth devoted to her family and friends. Unlike her literary contemporaries generally, she was little known in society, for which indeed she was unfitted during the last twelve years of her life by an asthmatic complaint greatly affecting her health and spirits. She died in 1823, in the sixtieth year of her age. Whatever may be thought of the effect of her writings in lowering the public taste, Mrs. Radcliffe's peculiar genius has scarcely ever yet been equalled.

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* "Encyclopædia Britannica." Biographical Notice by Sir Walter Scott.

Since her death—through half a century—as during her life, she has had many imitators; sensational novelists have been of late years remarkably abundant, but how few have ever approached this founder of their school in what may be called awe-inspiring and mystery-making power: a gift doubtless to be duly appreciated as one of many brilliant mental endowments bestowed upon the world though far surpassed by other gifts in genuine and enduring usefulness.

LADY MORGAN.

Few if any women of Mrs. Barbauld's time and the years immediately following wrote more books than Lady Morgan. For this reason and because to great industry and no mean ability were added generous sympathies with Ireland, her neglected country, she cannot be easily forgotten. But an utter want of taste, a shallowness which neither experience nor criticism could correct, and great indifference to the moral tendency of her writings—all forbid a distinguished rank to Lady Morgan.

With a weakness not to have been expected, she would never reveal her age. Perhaps her birth was not registered as it is said to have taken place on board ship between England and Ireland in

1777. Her father, a handsome Irish actor, MacOwen, was playing in the English theatres when he married under the name of Owenson, a Miss Hill, of Shrewsbury. Her daughter, called Sydney Owenson, was educated partially at a boarding-school in Dublin, chiefly by herself in accordance with plans she laid down, and under the influence of the circumstances of a wandering life. Still this culture was by no means unproductive; she became such an accomplished harpist and possessed such unfailing vivacity that she was soon welcomed in the best society. Before she was twenty she published a volume of poems dedicated to the Countess of Moira.

Her well-known song "Kate Kearney" was also written at this time. It is an animated beautiful lyric and will live as long as any of her productions. While yet in her teens she gave to the world several novels: notably, "St. Clair," "The Novice of St. Dominick" and "The Wild Irish Girl." These works evinced a fervent imagination though little acquaintance with either art or nature; but the "Wild Irish Girl" was exceedingly popular, running through seven editions in two years. In 1812 she became acquainted with Dr. Morgan, a physician of some repute who happened to be called in to see the

Marquis of Abercorn, and was afterwards invited to visit that nobleman at Baron's Court, where Miss Owenson was staying. An attachment ensued; Dr. Morgan made an offer, but the lady's aspirations were high; she replied that she would not change her name for that of Mrs. Morgan. The good-natured Lord Lieutenant, then the Duke of Richmond, it is said, hearing this at a ball, immediately conferred on the suitor the honour of knighthood, and Miss Owenson became Lady Morgan.

Sir Thomas Charles Morgan soon relinquished the medical profession and devoted himself to literature. Travelling on the continent with his wife he contributed to the books published by her on France and Italy the chapters on law, statistics and medical science. The work on France appeared in 1816, that on Italy in 1821; both had considerable merit and are still read with interest; despite of many striking faults they are acute, spirited and entertaining. Lord Byron bore testimony to the fidelity and excellence of "Italy" and another writer has remarked that "if the author had been less ambitious to display her reading and high company she might have been one of the most agreeable of tourists and observers." Among the novels which followed those already

mentioned were "O'Donnell" in 1814, "Florence Macarthy" in 1818, and the O'Briens and O'Flahertys" in 1827,—all full of Irish humour and intended to arouse patriotic Irish spirit. Besides these works Lady Morgan gave to the world "The Princess"—a tale founded on the Revolution in Belgium, "Dramatic Scenes from Real Life"—very poor in matter and affected in style, "The Life and Times of Salvator Rosa"—who was hostile, like his biographer, to the High Church and High Monarchy men of his day; "The Book of the Boudoir"—autobiographical sketches and reminiscences; and "Woman and her Master"—a philosophical history of woman down to the fall of the Roman Empire. Various minor publications appeared from time to time. Her last work was "The Book without a Name," in two volumes, put together like others in conjunction with her husband and consisting of sketches which had previously appeared in periodicals and of unpublished articles from the portfolio of both husband and wife. Preserving in a great degree her vivacity and love of society, Lady Morgan died in London in 1859, having survived her husband sixteen years.*

* "Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography." "Chambers' Cyclopædia of English Literature."

In reviewing her literary progress one of her friendly critics, Mr. H. F. Chorley, has the following observations:—

"The strong national enthusiasm of childhood, at once somewhat indiscriminate in its warmth and limited in its scope, will be seen to have ended in fearless and decided political partisanship, in the espousing of ultra-liberal doctrines abroad as well as at home. But let us quote Lady Morgan's own words from the preface to the last edition of 'O'Donnell.' 'After all, however,' she says, 'if I became that reviled but now very fashionable personage, a female politician, it was much in the same way as the *Bourgeoise Gentilhomme* spoke prose without knowing it, a circumstance perhaps not uncommon to Irish writers. . . . . For myself at least, born and dwelling in Ireland amidst my countrymen and their sufferings, I saw and I described, I felt and I pleaded; and if a political bias was ultimately taken, it originated in the natural condition of things, and not in "malice aforethought" of the writer.' In each successive novel, too, the characters will be found more and more boldly contrasted, the scenes prepared and arranged with finer artifice. If we cannot but notice the strong family likeness between all their plots, through every one of which a brilliant and devoted woman flits in masquerade, now to win a lover, now to save a friend, now to make a proselyte, we must also admit the living nature of many of their *dramatis personæ*, especially the broadly comic ones."

From this account of Lady Morgan's writings by herself it may be well to turn to an article in the *Edinburgh Review* of October, 1833, on "Dramatic Scenes from Real Life." No author in modern times had been subject to keener ridicule and more unsparing animadversions; hence the following judicial summary from a tribunal wishing to be impartial:—

"Lady Morgan as a writer had many qualities which invited assailants. She had sufficient cleverness to be worthy of notice—sufficient vehemence in the expression of her political opinions to render her obnoxious to the opposite party—and a sufficient display of crude reasonings and inaccurate statements to afford opportunities for a malicious critic, by dexterous selection, to reduce the value of her works greatly below their real amount. While we deprecate the severity with which she has been treated, we cannot wholly defend her. The public ought to be put on their guard against the faults of attractive writers, more than against those whose dulness is an effectual antidote. Lady Morgan was justly amenable to much of the censure which she received; but the censure ought to have been mixed with commendation. There are, perhaps, nowhere in her writings ten consecutive pages of which we wholly approve—at the same time, perhaps, any ten pages of hers would be found to contain more graphic expressions, more original ideas, more pointed specimens of sparkling truth than a

fourfold number in many a work which scarcely merited a single censure. Her faults are chiefly those of her sex and country. She is apt to be guided by the impulse of feeling, where calm judgment is chiefly required. She is frequently incorrect in her reasonings, and unsound in her conclusions. Her style is overlaid with excess of ornament and quotation. She is fond of elaborate turns and foreign phrases, and loves to say common things in an uncommon manner—clothing her ideas in a garb which no more resembles that which would be selected by a chastened taste, than the gaudy dress of a fancy ball resembles the common costume of society. These are her prevailing faults; but she has many merits to counterbalance them. A lively imagination, a good deal of humour, a fervid flow of animated language—sometimes swelling into eloquence—much epigrammatic talent, and the faculty of characteristic delineation. These are the agreeable qualities which her writings exhibit, and which, after the largest admissible deductions for her defects, leave an ample balance in her favour."*

Before quitting the region of imaginative literature let me say a few words on the defects and omissions of this work. I fear that some of these will be manifest notwithstanding a careful revision of the

* "Edinburgh Review," Vol. lviii.

original Paper and the additional memoirs intended to illustrate the period. My own consciousness of short-coming refers now particularly to my remarks at the close of the second part of the Paper on the successors of Mrs. Barbauld and her Contemporaries. Among those who are mentioned as "foremost in a long list" should have been included others well worthy to occupy the position. I ought to have remembered especially two ladies to whom all who have read their writings owe incalculable benefit —Mrs. Lewes (George Elliot) and Mrs. Gaskell. Nor should I have forgotten Miss Thackeray, Mrs. Oliphant and several of their contemporaries, some anonymous and some with well known names, but all doing good work in their day. Few ladies who have devoted themselves to providing good reading for young people—books at the same time healthy and amusing, have done more or better than Mrs. Marshall of Gloucester.

Mrs. Somerville.

It is sometimes said of certain tones of thought and characteristics of style that they are essentially feminine. Without doubt there are some subjects which, when women write, they generally prefer and excel in. It is almost a truism that works requiring imagination come from their pens more easily and frequently than those in which the logical faculty is exercised. Less familiar is the idea of Lord Jeffery, quoted in the earlier part of this work, that men could not have written some of the best of the books of which women were the authors. He mentions the novels of Miss Austen, the letters of Madame de Sevigné, the Hymns and Early Lessons of Mrs. Barbauld, and the Conversations of Mrs. Marcet; to which may be added the works of Mrs. Hemans, Miss Landon and Miss Brontë. And when it is remembered how often women have equalled and even surpassed men in branches of literature especially demanding depth of thought, firmness of style and patient research it is impossible to allow the theory of natural and necessary inferiority which is even yet contended for.

An instance of the highest kind is found in Mrs. Somerville. Imperfect as these pages may be they would have been more so without a tribute to this eminent and admirable woman. About half of her long life had passed when Mrs. Barbauld died, so that the ladies were at least to some extent contemporaries. Mrs. Somerville's maiden name was Fairfax (in Saxon Fair head-of-hair)—a name which crops up at intervals down the whole path of English history. It came to the front at Marston Moor and at Naseby, also on the judicial bench in several reigns; and it was still distinguished when borne by Captain Fairfax, Mrs. Somerville's father, who became an Admiral and was knighted for his services under Admiral Duncan at the battle of Camperdown. She was born in 1780; that "Pre-Education period" described by the Quarterly Reviewer* "when Dibdin sang, competitive examinations were unheard of, and the fine old sailor, though brave and noble and a perfect gentleman, cared but little for mental training for his daughter." His home in her early childhood was near the Firth of Forth, where Mary Fairfax is

* "Quarterly Review," vol. cxxxvi., to which this sketch is largely indebted.

pictured bounding over the Links of Burntisland, then a lonely but very lovely spot. Her father's house had a garden with beautiful flowers which terminated in a ledge of low black rocks washed by the sea; and in the hollows of these rocks and among the gorse and heather "the delicately moulded and exquisitely fair girl was never tired of searching for shells and flowers and sea-weed and all the living things of air and water to be found therein."

But nature was not her only teacher. At home certainly she learned very little. "My mother," she said, "taught me to read the Bible and say my prayers; otherwise I grew up a wild creature."* But when the wild creature was ten years old, Lady Fairfax consented that she should go for one year to a boarding-school at Musselburgh; and a weary year it was. Her chief lesson in the then "fashionable academy for young ladies" was a daily page of Johnson's dictionary, and her chief employment when she returned home was working a sampler according to the custom of the time—adorning with mysterious hieroglyphs a square piece of canvas. Fortunately there was a

* "Personal Recollections of Mrs. Somerville"—often quoted by the writer.

hunger in Mary Fairfax's brain which was neither appeased by the dictionary nor mortified by the sampler; she craved to learn the use of the globes from the village schoolmaster, and by aid of the celestial globe, studied the stars night after night at her bedroom window. More longings for knowledge were satisfied by occasional lessons at Edinburgh in music, dancing and painting, especially by a long visit to the manse of a beloved uncle at Jedburgh—the Rev. Dr. Somerville, one of the most enlightened men of the day, whose son became her second husband. All this she herself relates, also how she found accidentally her earliest algebraic symbols in a book of fashions; how she induced a tutor of her brother to buy for her "Euclid" and "Bonnycastle" and to hear her go through a few problems that she might be sure she was on the right road; and how, after mastering the first six books of Euclid, she trained her memory by demonstrating a certain number of propositions *every night in the dark after she retired to rest*, the frugal habits of the family not allowing a candle.

With all this, most charming is the picture of Mary Fairfax's early womanhood. So refined and delicate was her beauty that she was called the Rose of Jerwood. Dressed in a simple India muslin frock

with a little Flanders lace, she was a great favourite in Edinburgh society. She had no fortune to recommend her; the only reward of her father's gallant services was a knighthood during his life and a pension to his widow of seventy-five pounds a year. But those were times when frugality brought no discredit; and in the case of the brave Admiral's daughter, while her native dignity and her father's high name secured a host of friends, her moral and intellectual being were probably elevated by the circumstances in which she was placed. In her twenty-fifth year she married Mr. Samuel Greig, who though rich, lived in a small ill-ventilated house in London, where undisturbed by the world she pursued her mathematical studies. "Mr. Greig," she says, "did not prevent me from studying, but I met no sympathy whatever from him, as he had a very low opinion of the capacity of my sex, and had neither knowledge of nor interest in science of any kind." At the end of three years she returned a widow to her father's house with two children on whom she bestowed the tenderest care, now finding ample time for all the work she loved. Having conquered plane and spherical Trigonometry, conic sections and Fergusson's Astronomy, she plunged

into Newton's Principia; and prior to her second marriage, four years after the death of Mr. Greig, she mastered many other abstruse treatises, the mere titles of which filled the minds of her friends with astonishment.

The second marriage was altogether happy. Through forty-eight years Mr. Somerville's warm interest in her pursuits never failed. Of no great eminence himself he was proud of the development of his wife's powers. Her first great work was the translation in 1827, at Lord Brougham's request, of La Place's "Méchanique Celeste," for the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. Her next, "The Connexion of the Physical Sciences," which went through nine editions in England, besides many in America, and translations in German and Italian. Then came successively a "Sequel to the Méchanique Celeste," on the Form and Rotation of the Earth and Planets; "Physical Geography," written partly in Rome, partly in Florence, partly in Scotland, of which she lived to see six editions; and "Molecular and Microscopic Science," materials for which she gathered after she had passed her eightieth year, from the experiments of Tyndall, Gassiot, Plücher and Filippi. While these works were

coming out praises and honours were poured upon the author in well-deserved profusion. Gratified as she was, however, they never for a moment disturbed the even balance of her judgment, or lessened her interest in domestic duties. After the appearance of "Mechanism of the Heavens," she was elected an honorary member of the Astronomical Society at the same time with another remarkable woman—Caroline Herschel. Sir Robert Peel granted her a pension of £200, which Earl Russell raised to £300, Chantrey executed a beautiful bust of her for the hall of the Royal Society, and a new East Indiaman was christened by her name. Later in life she was chosen an associate of many other learned bodies at home and abroad, the Geographical Society of England awarding her their silver medal, and that of Florence their first gold medal. Living in Italy so long before her death at Naples in 1872, she was especially gratified by the last mark of respect, saying with reference to it, "An honour so unexpected, and so far beyond my merits, surprised and affected me more deeply than I can express." And again, "In the events of my life it will be seen how much I have been honoured by the scientific societies and universities of Italy."

A very brief abstract of the testimony of eminent men and women to Mrs. Somerville's great services will be sufficient. In her case there was rarely if ever a discordant note, and praise was not only universal but of the highest kind. Lord Brougham considered in 1827 that she was the only person in England capable of translating properly La Place's "Méchanique Celeste." Sir John Herschel, in reviewing the book, says, "We know not the geometer in this country who might not congratulate himself on the execution of such a work."* Sir Henry Holland remarks, "Scotland is proud of having produced a Crichton—she may also be proud of having given birth-place to Mary Somerville." Mr. Ticknor, after visiting her at Chelsea, in 1838, speaks of her as "among the most extraordinary women that ever lived, both by the simplicity of her character and the singular variety, power and brilliancy of her talents."† Mr. Sopwith records in his Journal, 1870, "One of my chief objects in going to Naples was to visit Mrs. Somerville. Very imperfect is the homage which any words of mine

* "Quarterly Review," Vol. xcix.

† "Life of Ticknor," Vol. ii. p. 154

can express compared with the inward respect and esteem which I entertain for her." So with the most eminent women of the day. "My dear Mary Somerville," says Joanna Baillie, "whom I am proud to call my friend and that she so calls me. I could say much on this point, but I dare not. The pride I have in thinking of you as a philosopher and a woman cannot be exceeded." Mrs. Marcet and Miss Edgeworth write in the same strain, while Italian ladies of high rank and great attainments sought to cultivate her friendship—one of them addressing to her a volume of poems full of affection and respect. Miss Martineau also was one of Mrs. Somerville's friends who visited her at Chelsea. After confirming what had been often remarked as to her good taste in dress and her apparent unconsciousness of any peculiarity in her pursuits, she adds:—

"It was delightful to go to tea at her house in Chelsea and find everything in order and beauty;—the walls hung with her fine drawings; her music in the corner, and her tea table spread with good things. In the midst of these household elegancies, Dr. Somerville one evening pulled open a series of drawers, to find something he wanted to show me. As he shut one after another, I ventured to ask what those strange things were which filled every drawer.

'O! they are only Mrs. Somerville's diplomas,' said he, with a droll look of pride and amusement."*

As may well be supposed Mrs. Somerville's sympathies with other gifted women were always vigorous. She rejoiced greatly in the artistic success of Rosa Bonheur and Harriet Hosmer, as she would have done in that of Miss Thompson. In the latest pages of her "Recollections" she mentions the efforts which had been, and still ought to be made for the advancement of women. "Age," she says, "has not abated my zeal for the emancipation of my sex from the unreasonable prejudice too prevalent in Britain against a literary and scientific education for their benefit." She approved of the establishment of the Ladies' College at Girton, and, with a generous desire to carry out her wishes, her daughters presented to that institution the whole of her valuable library of scientific works. In her high public spirit and in many of her political and religious sympathies Mrs. Somerville resembled Mrs. Barbauld. She loved the cause of progress in every country, and never concealed her attachment to it, though there was nothing one-sided or intolerant in her opinions. If "her

* "Harriet Martineau's Autobiography," Vol. i. p. 357.

constant prayer," as her daughter records, "was for light and truth," her constant practice was to make religion the "main-spring of her life," to associate thoughts of the Creator with all His wonderful works, and to kindle in others the flame of devotion which warmed her own heart. That she was preached against by name in York Cathedral (as she mentions in her "Recollections"), with reference to her work on "Physical Geography," could not have troubled her long; well could she afford to do as Mrs. Barbauld had done—

"Give large credit for that debt of fame"

her country owed her. And above all other consolations was the belief that true religion would be promoted by reverent scientific investigation.

"As Newton, when he had finished his sublime exposition of the Theory of Gravitation in the 'Principia,' 'burst into the infinite and knelt,' so in her humbler walk in his, and La Place's footsteps, Mrs. Somerville allowed no treatise on natural science to pass from her hands without some such reverent sign as men pay when they have entered a church. Telescope and microscope each admitted her into a new Temple, and from the 'Preliminary Dissertation' to her 'Mechanism of the Heavens,' from which we have just quoted one noble passage, to the motto she chose for her

'Molecular and Microscopic Science:' '*Deus magnus in magnis, maximus in minimus*,' she entered and quitted it with bowed head and humble steps."

"The long evening of Mrs. Somerville's life was one of happiness only overclouded at intervals as husband, son, and friend, dropped away from the circle of love and sympathy in which she dwelt. Her abode in Italy (entirely her own choice), if it deprived her necessarily of some of the intellectual enjoyments of England, yet permitted her modest income to supply all such luxuries as her age and tastes required. * * * * Friends she always had around her, and from time to time visitors from the busy English world of literature, politics, and science, with whom she would converse for hours with delight and animation. An evening with Professor Tyndall or Dean Stanley was marked with a white stone. * * * * Nor in picturing her later years must we forget the attached servants who made of her apartments, in a vast Italian palace, always a real home. To see her good Luigi carrying the light burden of his beloved Padrona' in his arms up-stairs from her carriage, or bringing her early breakfast and arranging her pillows in the morning, was to witness a relation which, could it be oftener realised, would make life considerably more pleasant than many a millionaire finds it with a whole train of mercenary domestics."

"'God bless you, dearest friend,' she wrote, just three weeks before she died, to one who had sent her an essay 'On the Life after Death,' 'for your irresistible arguments of

our Immortality; not that I ever doubted of it, but, as I shall soon enter my ninety-third year, your words are an inexpressible comfort.' The summer and autumn of 1872 had been full of her usual peaceful and happy occupations, and specially interesting from the great eruption of Vesuvius, of which she was able to be a near witness, and of which she wrote detailed observations. Up to the 28th of November she remained in perfect health, and every morning spent some hours in studying and solving the problems in a 'Memoir on Linear and Associative Algebra,' given her by Professor Pierce, of Harvard, and those in Serret's 'Cours d'Algébre Supérieure,' and 'Tait on Quaternions,' kindly sent her by Mr. Spottiswoode. On the day mentioned she felt less well than usual, but passed the afternoon in her drawing-room with her daughters and niece speaking of absent friends and other topics; and only towards ten o'clock complained of trifling pain, for which her physician, when summoned, soon found a remedy. She fell asleep—a sweet, quiet sleep—which lasted a few hours; and then, just after midnight, her daughters, watching beside her, saw a slight change. The stillness which had come over her face was deeper than that of any earthly rest. The morning that rose over that blue Italian sea rested on a countenance to which the 'Great Master,' Death, had given his grand and sacred calm. For her there was another morning—on a yet brighter shore.*

* "Quarterly Review" CXXXVI., p. 103.

Miss Caroline Herschel.

One more contemporary remains, not less remarkable than any in the list. Nay, in practical, self-denying, laborious devotion to a noble science, Miss Herschel has scarcely been equalled. This rather than any service rendered to literature demands that she should be held in grateful remembrance by the country in which she spent the largest part of her life.

The family of Herschel were originally settled in Moravia. Two hundred and fifty years ago Persecution drove from their homes three brothers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They settled in Saxony where they could enjoy their Protestant faith and devote themselves to industrial occupations. Isaac again emigrated, this time to Hanover, and being a good musician took service in the band of the Royal Guard as a Haut-boy player. He married and had a large family, one of whom became Sir William Herschel, the first astronomer of the race, another was Caroline, who followed the fortunes of her scientific brother.

Although William's history is well known, the outlines may be given here in connection with Caroline's.

At one and twenty he came to England from Hanover to earn his living by music,—the time being about the end of the third quarter of the eighteenth century. He was first band-master and church-organist for a short time at Halifax, and then he came to Bath in quest of similar employment, moved also by the hope of being able to cultivate other scientific tastes which from childhood he had loved. Here while his Sundays were devoted to the organ of a fashionable chapel his week-days were divided between playing in the Pump Room, the Theatre or Public Concerts and learning, without any tutor, Greek, Latin, French and Italian, Optics, Acoustics, Mathematics and Metaphysics.*

Caroline Herschel joined her brother at Bath in 1772. She was then twenty-two years of age and appears to have been ignorant of almost every thing except reading, writing and knitting. Like her

* I collected these few facts relating to William Herschel for a paper which I read to the Bath Literary and Philosophical Association in 1871. The organ he played was at the Octagon Chapel in Milsom Street, and the house he lived in when his sister joined him and where he constructed his first telescope was probably No. 13, New King Street. His portrait hangs over the fire-place of the Bath Literary and Scientific Institution.

brother however she applied herself earnestly to self-culture and though always inferior to him in general attainments was soon able to help him efficiently in his work. On the first morning after her arrival she began to learn the rudiments of arithmetic, with what success eventually may be judged from the fact that the numerical results which rendered her brother's observations available to science were all worked out by her. But the first efforts of both were directed to obtain the means of livelihood. He had sent for her from Hanover chiefly in order that she might assist him in his work as a musician. Her voice being good she was trained for service by three lessons a day either singing or at the harpsichord. In a short time she was installed as the leading solo singer of the concerts and oratorios which William provided for his fastidious audience,—those being the palmy days of Bath, employing herself in the intervals in training the treble singers and copying the scores for the various performers.*

At this period so much was the German music-master in request that he had to give no less than thirty-eight lessons daily. He found time, however,

* Memoirs and Correspondence of Caroline Herschel. "Quarterly Review," No. 282.

to write papers on scientific subjects for a local Philosophical Society of which he was a member, and every spare moment he gave to the studies he most dearly loved. Not being rich enough to buy a telescope he proceeded to make one, taking as his pattern a small Gregorian which he had been able to hire from a broker's shop, and using as his materials some fragments bought of a worthy member of the Society of Friends who had been in business as a polisher of mirrors. To aid in this work and in his professional duties William summoned his brother Alexander from Hanover. Every room in their house was turned into a workshop; every hour free from musical engagements saw them hard at work grinding or polishing. Caroline complained that they were continually tearing their ruffles or bespattering them with molten pitch; yet she was in constant loving attendance, reading to them while they were at work, sometimes Sterne or Fielding, sometimes the "Arabian Nights." At Bath, however, there was a certain Miss Fleming, a celebrated dancing mistress, from whom she was persuaded to take two lessons a week "to drill her for a gentlewoman," with reference to which Miss Herschel says in her diary, "God

knows how she succeeded!" Happier far was she when at length on the grass plot behind the house she aided in making preparations for erecting the twenty feet telescope, the precursor of that giant instrument which afterwards attracted visitors from every part of the world.

The fame of all this spread rapidly. Prominent astronomers came to Bath to see what had been done. George the Third heard of it and invited William Herschel to Windsor and to bring his instruments. He became the King's private astronomer, removing to Datchet with the poor salary of two hundred pounds a year which was less than he had been earning in his profession. Miss Herschel of course removed with him, glad enough still to be his housekeeper but more rejoiced to begin now in earnest to train herself for an assistant astronomer. "By way of encouragement," she says, "a telescope adapted for sweeping the heavens was given to me, I was to sweep for comets, and I see by my journal that I began to record all the remarkable appearances that I saw in my sweep." It was her business to watch the clock and carefully to note the time; and for many years, night after night whenever the weather was not too cloudy the brother and sister watched and swept

and wrote till sunrise. In 1786 they removed to Slough where Herschel, now knighted, carried on the business of a telescope maker on a large scale, kings and princes and nobles giving him orders and his sister helping him to grind the mirrors and superintend all details. But she did more, she herself became an original discoverer; intensely devoted to her work of "sweeping the heavens" she saw one night when her brother happened to be absent, an object which she believed to be a comet and the next night she ascertained that it was so. With great delight she communicated the result to her friend M. Aubert who sent in reply a warm letter of congratulation:

"'I wish you joy,' he says, 'most sincerely on the discovery. I am more pleased than you can well conceive that *you* have made it, and I think I see your *wonderfully clever* and wonderfully amiable brother, upon the news of it, shed a tear of joy. You have immortalised your name, and you deserve such a reward from the Being who has ordered all these things to move as we find them for your assiduity in the business of astronomy, and for your love for so celebrated and so deserving a brother."

Altogether Caroline Herschel discovered eight comets. No exultation on her own account ever

marked the simple entries in her journals. She wrote letters immediately to the principal astronomers of England and other countries with full particulars, and "commending the discovery to their protection." Many years afterwards she said with characteristic modesty, "I never called a comet mine till several post-days had passed without a letter coming to hand. And after all it is only like the children's game, 'Wer am ersten, kich ruft, soll den Apfel haben,' 'Whoever first calls *kick* shall have the apple.'" This scientific success may have lightened but did not neutralise the trial in store for her. Sir William Herschel married; he was made happy but it was the great grief of her life. "To resign the supreme place by her brother's side which she had filled for sixteen years with such hearty devotion could not be otherwise than painful in any case, but how much more so in this where equal zeal in the same pursuit must have made identity of interest and purpose as complete as it was rare.* It was she who converted his rough notes into lucid papers to be read before learned societies; she did for him an amount of labour which filled those who were in the secret

* Memoir by Mrs. John Herschel.

with amazement; she served him with a great and unwearied love, content to stand aside and claim no share in the credit of all the great works he performed.

"The ten years which succeeded her brother's marriage were among the most laborious of Caroline Herschel's life. The Royal Society published two of her works, namely 'A Catalogue of 860 Stars, observed by Flamsteed, but not included in the British Catalogue,' and 'A General Index of Reference to every Observation of every Star in the British Catalogue.' But the most laborious, as well as the most valuable, of her works was the 'Reduction and Arrangement in the form of a Catalogue of all the Star-clusters and Nebulæ observed by Sir William Herschel in his Sweeps.' It was for this that the Gold Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society was conferred upon her, and the extraordinary distinction of an Honorary Membership," at the same time that the same honour was conferred on Mrs. Somerville.

"About the time when Sir John Herschel, having arrived at man's estate, took his degree as Senior Wrangler, Sir William's health began to fail. He still pursued his labours, but no longer with his wonted energy, and the journals are filled with remarks which show the bitter grief with which Miss Herschel noted his declining strength. He died in 1822, in the seventy-second year of his age. The terrible blow of her brother's death seemed to paralyse the energies of his sister, who determined to leave England for ever

as soon as the beloved remains were buried out of her sight. She collected the few things she desired to keep, and retired to Hanover. Her letters from thence to her nephew, Sir John Herschel, are full of recollections of the past, and abound with anecdotes of the great astronomer with whom she passed so many years."

"It is sad to think of her in her old age. She was then seventy-two, going back desolate and broken-hearted to the home of her youth. Still more sad when we remember that she was still removed by twenty-six weary years from her rest. She found everything changed. She had been removed from the old familiar paths, and the authoress of the 'Memoir' truly applies to her words borrowed from one of Miss Edgeworth's sisters, 'You don't know the blank of life after having lived within the radiance of genius.'

"Caroline Herschel died at Hanover in 1848, at the age of ninety-eight. Her death-bed was attended by the daughter of the Madame Beckedorff, whose acquaintance she had made at the house of the Hanover milliner" of whom she learned the art of dressmaking eighty years before.

"Her coffin was covered with garlands of laurel and cypress, and palm-branches sent from Herrenhausen, and the service was read over it in the same garrison church in which nearly a century before she had been christened. A lock of her brother's hair, and an old almanack which had been used by her father, were, at her own desire, buried with her." *

* "Quarterly Review," vol. cxli. p 324.

How Long They Lived!

The literary and scientific pursuits of Mrs. Barbauld and her contemporaries appear to have been largely conducive to length of years. Although a considerable list might also be made of aged eminent men of the same period, distinguished in similar paths, yet the average longevity in their case is not so high as in the other. Both, however, abound in beautiful illustrations of the calm and gentle old age described by Cicero: *Est etiam quietè, et purè, et eleganter, actæ ætatis placida ac lenis senectus.* And when the Roman orator rejoices in the example of Plato continuing his learned labours in his eighty-first year, of Isocrates his, in his ninety-fourth, and of Leontinus Georgias his, even till he was a hundred and seven,* we in these latter days may also rejoice in many examples almost equally bright. Goethe is said to have been in much vigour at eighty-two; Walter Savage Landor "warmed both hands at the fire of life" at ninety; the Sage of Chelsea—Mr. Carlyle, still lives to help us to realise the pleasant pictures in Cicero's fascinating treatise. The ages of

* Cicero. De Senectute.

the authors of whom memoirs or notices have been given in this work are as follow :—

	Died.	Aged.
Miss Jane Austen	1816 ...	42
Mrs. Radcliffe	1823 ...	59
Miss Mitford	1855 ...	69
Mrs. Trimmer	1810 ...	69
Miss Jane Porter	1850 ...	74
Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu ...	1800 ...	80
Mrs. Piozzi	1821 ...	81
Mrs. Barbauld	1822 ...	82
Miss Edgeworth	1849 ...	82
Lady Morgan	1859 ...	82
Madame d'Arblay	1840 ...	88
Miss Hannah More ...	1833 ...	88
Mrs. Marcet	1859 ...	89
Mrs. Joanna Baillie ...	1851 ...	89
Miss Berry	1852 ...	90
Mrs. Somerville	1872 ...	92
Miss Harriet Lee	1851 ...	95
Miss Caroline Herschel ...	1848 ...	98
Lady Smith	1877 ...	103

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